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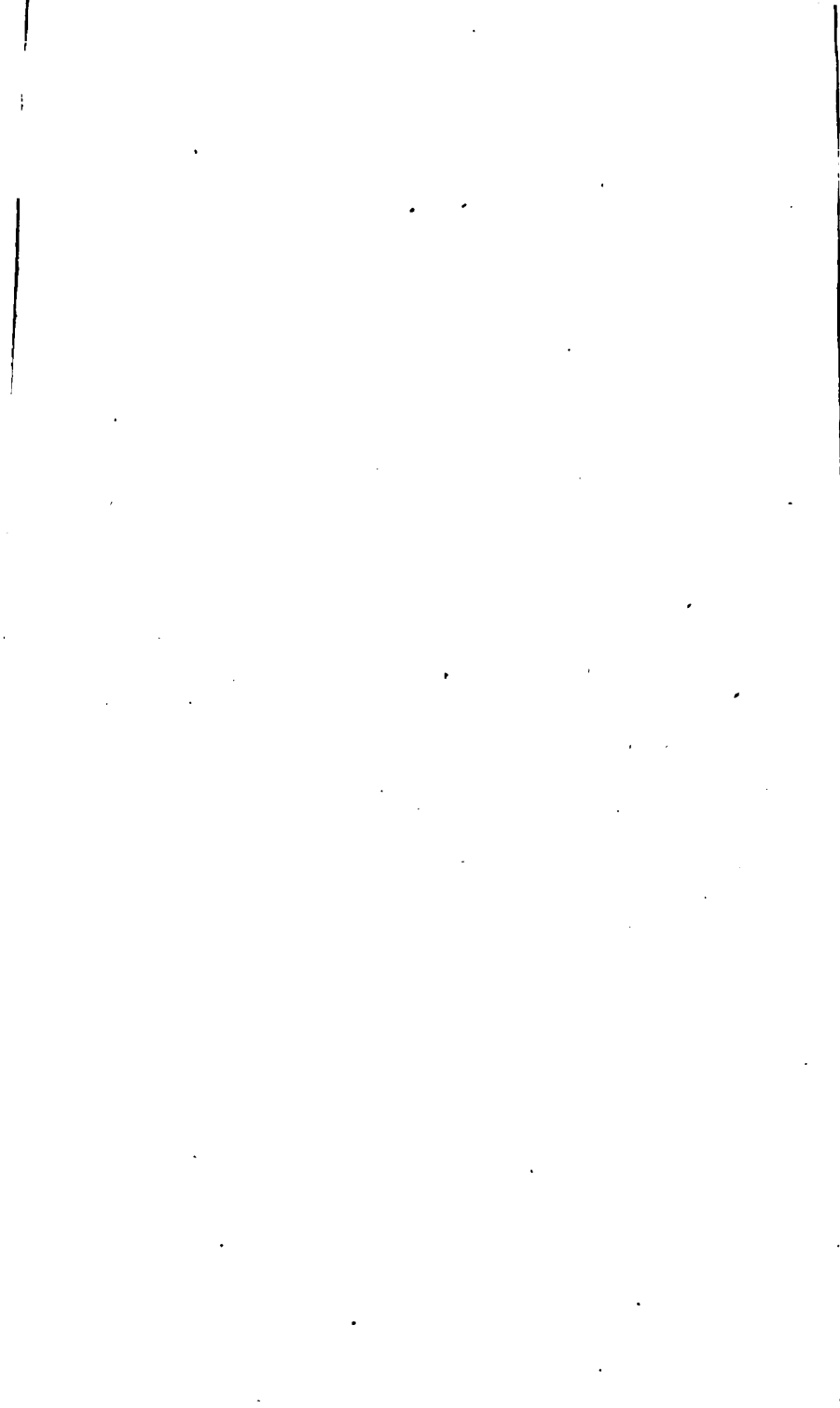
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LETTERS  
OF A  
GERMAN COUNTESS;

WRITTEN  
DURING HER TRAVELS IN  
TURKEY, EGYPT, THE HOLY LAND,  
SYRIA, NUBIA, &c.  
IN 1843-4.

BY  
IDA, COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LETTERS

OF

A GERMAN COUNTESS.

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LETTER XXI.

TO THE COUNTESS SCHÖNBURG-WECHSELBURG.

Journey across Lebanon to Baalbec, and over the Anti-Libanus  
to Damascus,

Damascus, October 14, 1843.

My much loved Emy,

It seems as though I were never to write to you! Throughout the whole of this long journey I have sent you but a solitary letter; the only excuse I can offer, is that in addressing one of your dear circle I seem to address you all; to-day, however, I will direct my communication to you. And how much have I to tell you! I am in Damascus! So far from home I have never yet been; Lebanon and Anti-Libanus lie between me and the Great Sea which separates me from Europe;—but alas! Da-



mascus is not the Paradise, which the enthusiastic poets of the Omiades have described, and which European travellers have re-echoed in prose.

But I will commence with our departure from Beyrout, which took place at ten o'clock in the morning of the 9th instant. First of all I must, however, introduce you to a very worthy personage, whose business it will be to provide and take charge of all the arrangements and requisites throughout the journey, our factotum in short, and dragoman. He is a native of Cyprus named Giorgio, who was well recommended to us at Constantinople, and who without doubt is a most adroit and serviceable man.

Though Giorgio bears the title of dragoman, you must not infer that he is one of the important and sometimes great men who act in that capacity to the European Legations, nor even one of the Interpreters to the Porte, by whom, in former times, all political business with foreign countries was transacted, because few beside themselves, (who were generally renegados,) understood the Western languages. Giorgio is neither more nor less than what we should call in our own country a courier, a servant who has to attend to all the arrangements of the journey; but as it is indispensable that these couriers should be able to speak Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, besides French and Italian, they also are called dragomans in Constantinople.

Giorgio having performed the journey several

times, knows exactly what is wanted, and has furnished us accordingly. These requisites are not small: they consist of two tents, mattresses, and other bedding, a table, a couple of chairs, a cooking apparatus, coffee service, washing basin, table-linen and towels, candlesticks, lanterns and lights; a stock of rice, maccaroni, tea, chocolate, coffee, lemons and sugar, all this besides a few carpet-bags was sufficient luggage for three horses.

The wisest thing that I have done for a long time was to send back my refined lady's-maid from Constantinople, as people of this description are worse than useless in travelling in Lebanon, or across the Desert; and, what will perhaps surprise you still more, is, that while in Vienna I purchased a complete *costume de gamin*, very simple, consisting of a blouse and pantaloons, of grey woollen cloth, a red and white striped chemise closed at the throat, a round straw hat, and high-buttoned shoes of couil, most convenient for a journey of this kind, where you have to sleep in your tent, consequently without changing your apparel, and frequently have to ascend and descend very steep and stony places on foot. Our long riding-habits and usual style of dress are quite unsuited to travelling here, while my costume, to which in rainy weather I add a brown burnus which completely envelopes me, is incomparable.

Giorgio wears the Albanian dress of pure white cambric; and I really could not help smiling when first I saw this tall athletic man, with his brown

physiognomy, dressed out like a child, in white muslin, with red morocco shoes and a gaily coloured sash. In rainy weather, he puts on a dark brown felt mantle which is impervious to the wet, and covers him from head to foot.

The morning we started from Beyrout there was quite a tumultuous scene, as four Frenchmen, *en route* for Jerusalem, were to take their departure at the same time. Their twelve horses and our seven, the attendants and luggage of all kinds, completely crammed the small court-yard belonging to the house, while there was a clamour, shouting, quarrelling, commanding and countermanding, which baffles all description. The mule-drivers insisted on placing the baggage one way, the dragoman another; this horse was too weak to bear anything, the other strong enough to bear all. The luggage was packed and taken down again: this did not fit—that was not firm enough. The delay thus occasioned was however of no importance, for as the first days' journey was not to extend beyond six leagues, an early departure was unnecessary.

At length, however, everything was arranged and we set off, the pack horses leading the way, the Seïs (the conductor of the mules), sometimes riding upon one of them while his two men walked by the side, then followed Giorgio incessantly encouraging and driving on the men and beasts: I rode next, then Bystram, and a servant closed the rear.

Our cavalcade met with but few obstructions, for

the road over the mountains is one of the narrowest I have ever seen, and the horses are accustomed to follow in a line, and will not move abreast, even when there is room. Gradually ascending, we at first rode between hedges of splendid cactus which enclose the plantations, then proceeded through groves of olive and mulberry trees, where the acacia, with its small golden blossom, round and soft as silk, diffused the most delicious fragrance. At home we cherish the tiny plant in a hot house, here it rises to the height of our elder trees.

We did not long remain in this lovely southern region, but ascended higher and higher along the most unbeaten paths imaginable, over rumbling stones, some not larger than a man's fist, and others complete boulders. The poor horses can scarcely find a level spot large enough to place their feet firmly along the whole range of Lebanon; but they are accustomed to it, and are wonderfully expert. They first try their ground, then proceed with all the caution and circumspection of a cat. My faithful horse did not once make a false step; for though this steep ascent is by no means pleasant, it is perfectly safe, and the traveller has nothing to fear on this score.

Lebanon bears not the slightest resemblance to either the Alps or the Pyrenees; it cannot boast their luxuriant declivities, their eternal fields of snow, their thundering cataracts, their abruptly rising peaks, and crystal summits, which, towering high

above the clouds, look in majestic grandeur upon the vales below : Lebanon is a calcareous mountain chain, and although its highest points, the Djebel Makmel for instance, are said to rise 9000 feet, this does not change its formation, for it consists of long undulating, craggy ridges, above which rise those isolated heights, which are always of a dome-shaped, and never of a conical character. Here the water has had full play among the calcareous rocks, which it has saturated, rent, defaced and then abandoned ; hence Lebanon has an austere aspect, far different from the coolness and the freshness of the running streams and fragrant meadows which greet the Alpine traveller.

Yet Lebanon is not sterile, though devoid of the natural luxuriance of uncultivated vegetations. The Maronites, that industrious little band of Christians, who have settled in these mountains, have adorned it with corn fields, and vineyards, with villages and convents, especially on its western slope, which faces the sea, and is by far the most pleasing. Nay, as we traversed our rough, wild path, and looked down from the heights, we were often struck with the picturesque beauty of a peaceful hamlet embosomed in umbrageous fig-trees, sequestered in the defile beneath, or to descry a little church, overshadowed by palm-trees on some distant rock ; while again above our heads, herds of wild goats, with their long black hair, were skipping from cliff to cliff, or browsing on the scanty herbage.

We also met large droves of asses and mules, for

Beyrout, you must remember, is the harbour of Damascus. All the productions of Persia and the far East, which are in demand in Europe, are conveyed by way of Damascus to Beyrout, and again European goods are sent to Persia and Bagdad through this city. England inundates the Levant with her commerce, especially with cotton manufactures of every description. The principals of two Manchester houses were our fellow passengers on board the steamer, and came for the purpose of forming mercantile connections in the Levant. France sends her silks, which are so beautiful, and at the same time so inexpensive that the oriental ladies greatly prefer them to their own; Italy also contributes her share: but the Lyonese goods are sent wholesale to Persia.

Neither is Germany excluded, and I was not a little surprised to ascertain the nature of the goods which two German merchants brought to Beyrout. Only fancy! into the very mart of oriental shawls and Damascus blades, the one introduced cotton shawls from Elberfeld, and the other steel and hardware from Solingen. Who would have thought this in the time of Charles the Great and Haroun al-Raschid! The extent of the commercial intercourse between Beyrout and Damascus is indicated by the long train of mules; but at first sight it appears greater than it really is, for the bales of goods which we should transport in one good sized waggon, are here borne on the backs of many mules.

The villagers whom we met greeted us with much cordiality—the women laying their hands on their breast, while the men touched their breasts and forehead. The women have the best of all possible reason for not touching the forehead, even, because they cannot! for the most hideous head-dress that a vitiated taste could invent, rises aslant above their eyes, in the form of a cone a yard high! This monstrous wooden tower is fastened to their heads by means of a wooden spring; over this they throw their dark blue veil, which is secured with a band or leathern strap to this tower, cone, or horn, for I really know not what to call this frightful machine!—and they then feel perfectly satisfied that they are quite in the fashion. The great pressure of the spring is said to occasion such intense pain that many women sleep with the horn fastened to their heads, as they cannot endure the torture of replacing it after it has once been removed. This crown of honour appertains however to the women only, and not to the young girl, and is worn exclusively by the Maronites. Beneath this dark blue veil, which shrouds the entire figure, they wear a blue or white dress and ample white pantaloons, of a thin coarse calico.

The men have a much better appearance: their large turbans, fully plaited pantaloons, and their gay jackets, with slashed hanging sleeves, form a very picturesque costume. Here and there we saw them working in their gardens. The threshing floor

is always laid down close to the fields : it is a circular spot, cleared of stones, and the ground is firmly trodden down. In one of these they were threshing with a sort of sledge or dray ; it was a very animated sight : a horse is fastened to this uncouth machine, upon which stands a man who drives in a circle round the floor which is thickly strewn with corn, till the chaff is fairly separated from the wheat.

Our first day's ride, which terminated at a quarter past four, at the Khan Husseyn, was by far the most interesting portion of our journey, inasmuch as it presented to us at the same time the cultivation of Lebanon and its beauty. The peculiar charm of Lebanon consists in the contrasts of the loveliness of its colours with those of the ocean. The naked barren rock steeps itself in the effulgence of the glorious sunbeams, and at morn and evening especially, enshrines itself in a floating veil of roseate hue, blended with gold and purple, or tinged with deep tender violet, such as no pencil ever yet portrayed, which like a rainbow fling their harmonious hues over the sterile mountain chain and mitigate its austerity, while the ocean, far below at its base, visible at every creek and inlet, retains its peaceful, heavenly blue.

A khan is an inn, a small, low building rudely constructed of stones, and is generally built in the vicinity of a spring or well. It has neither door



nor window, but admits light and air, man and beast, through the same aperture, a sort of archway supported by pillars.

Independently of shelter, a good khan affords coffee, fowls and eggs; but an indifferent one, absolutely nothing. As all the droves of mules and horses rest outside of these khans, and their drivers within, you can imagine that a halt there is by no means agreeable.

Those who possess a tent have it struck at the distance of at least a hundred paces, and are merely supplied with the requisite provisions from the khan. Our tent, which is very commodious, and covered with double linen painted in green oil colour and furnished with partitions, is easily put up and arranged. This done, the common grey one is pitched for the men, after which I sit down to dinner, which consists alternately of fowls and rice, and fowls and maccaroni. Giorgio proposed a greater variety of dishes, and was very anxious to display his skill in preparing omelets and cutlets; a request with which we complied at Damascus, but during our journey we deemed it an unnecessary annoyance to extend the culinary department beyond what was absolutely needful. For my own part, I should have no objection always to confine my dinner to one dish; but I suppose I must not speak of this plebeian taste, and only indulge in it during my pilgrimages in the wild desert. While

dinner is preparing, I perform my toilette, and in about an hour and a half after our arrival, sit down and partake of a good meal.

Tea is served later. It is just possible that sleep may follow; but the night is the least agreeable part of the time. It is bitterly cold in the mountains as soon as the sun has set, and, in spite of clothes, plenty of covering, and a well secured tent, the keen night air makes one shiver. It is, however, an unspeakable comfort that we are quite unmolested by insects of any kind.

At daybreak I gladly leave my comfortless couch, which consists of a straw mat, a thick carpet, mattress and pillows, which, according to the custom of the country, are stuffed with cotton instead of horsehair, and covered with a wadded deer-skin quilt; this is followed by an unwelcome moment, for while I am drinking a cup of strong coffee, the tent over my head is taken away, and I sit without shelter in the cold morning air. Packing up and lading the animals occupies about an hour, the most uncomfortable one throughout the day. Our camp stools are the last put up, and the first taken down. My departure generally takes place at seven o'clock, and no trace remains of our encampment, save the small black spot of ashes surrounded by stones, which indicate the place where Giorgio performed his cooking.

Thus you see, my dear Emy, that I have a house and a complete establishment, for as was our first

night's lodging at the Khan Husseyn, so will it be throughout the whole of our Syrian journey. Thus for the first time in my life I have a house of my own, and this, the house of a Bedouin—a tent! Yes, Emy, you may smile, but this was prophesied as I lay in my cradle. We generally say of improbabilities—"This was not sung over my cradle;" but all the improbabilities of my eventful life were sung over mine; all, yes all; and I understood them too, at least the greater part; and I suppose I shall understand the whole by and bye. As I was seated the first evening under my tent, and beheld at a glance, mountain, sea, and sky, the most sublime objects that the eye of man can look upon, and was indulging in the play of fancy, the nursery tale which induced me to say, "thus it was sung as I lay in my cradle," flitted before my imagination.

You either know, dear Emy, or you do not know, that there are certain lines in the palm of the hand, which as they either converge or diverge, indicate that in after years, its owner *will* or *will not* possess a house of his own. Thus at least was told the tale of chiromancy in our nursery, and filled me with sorrow and displeasure; for, O misery! the lines in my hand unequivocally declared—no house. And, such are children! my brothers and sisters, each gifted with the pledge in their hand, of the sure possession of fine houses, were not a little proud of their prospects, while I, the eldest, had no such inheritance; and many were the bicker-

ings which this ideal-promise gave rise to, till at last our chafed spirits were calmed by the declaration—by whom suggested I know not, perhaps by myself—that if not a house, doubtless a palace would once be owned by me ! When the question of our future houses and castles was agitated, I boasted much of mine, but nevertheless involuntarily withdrew my eyes from the ominous lines in my hand.

And now, while on Mount Lebanon, when after the lapse of so many years, these childish days rose to my mind, how happy was I, dearest Emy, that fortune had spoken true ; for had I been mistress of a house or castle, I should probably never have pitched my tent on Lebanon, but like yourselves have had to sit at home, shut up between four walls. Thus even in early infancy, Providence often accords to us a presentiment of our future lot, and on these heights too, we are specially admonished to look above for safety and protection. In Europe we have many human defences, laws, penalties, magistrates, and police ;—here our only shield against robbery, murder, perils and accidents is the arm of Omnipotence, and this has never failed me.

Soon after daybreak on the 10th, the scenery around the Khan Husseyn was most splendid, for, when lighted up by the morning sun, it is yet more beautiful than in the evening. Through a deep cleft in the mountain, we beheld the entire promontory on which Beyrout, with its cheerful gardens and pretty houses rises from the sea. The harbour and

shipping were distinctly visible; a majestic vessel with outspread sails was swiftly gliding along, while another had already gained the distant sea, and with its snowy wings looked like a fairy-ship entering the haven of Heaven. Around us lay a world of ruined rocks: on a distant declivity a village in the shade of early twilight, and above it on a higher eminence, already illumined by the morning sun, stood a large convent; and while the herald of day speeded his course over the mountains, the pale moon, evanescent as a vapour, gently and lingeringly descended, as a dream-like vision below the distant horizon.

Had I always such a scene before me, I should not easily grow weary during the hour of packing; but such a prospect as I then enjoyed is rarely met with.

We started at seven o'clock, and at nine reached the height of the pass, by means of a very indifferent road. Henceforward we had to descend the mountain, and thus lost sight of the glorious ocean, nor did the view from Anti-Libanus into the valley of Bekaa, which separates the two chains, at all compensate for what we had left behind. This ridge is uncultivated and uninhabited, and even less bold and rugged than Lebanon itself, while Bekaa, a very fertile corn land, possessing a fine soil, is at this season of the year parched by the summer's sun, and sighs for the autumnal rains to gladden it with verdure. After the soil has been fertilised by the rains, the operations of tillage are superficially

and easily performed. The corn ripens quickly, and is gathered in the spring, after which the land assumes the dry, burnt up appearance in which we saw it.

Travellers who speak of Bekaa as a paradise, must have visited it in the spring. Yet without doubt this valley might be one of the most luxuriant upon earth, rich as the plains of Lombardy, as the Vega of Valentia and Granada, if similar care and industry were bestowed upon it. It has an abundance of water, for the Leontes, a considerable river, which rises from a lake in Bekaa, runs through the whole valley, and falls into the sea above Tyre, and might be admirably employed in irrigation, and Bekaa thus be converted into a fruitful garden. But there is no probability of this being done, as the inhabitants are extremely simple and their wants are amply supplied by moderate labour, while the government thinks only of draining the land and the people, never of improving the one, nor contributing to the well being of the other.

If the Turkish government could be depended upon, I mean if it could command order in its own dominion, how much good might be effected if two or three thousand skilful and industrious Germans were sent to this favoured land, instead of being exiled to America with precarious prospects. Unhappily, however, there is no security here; were an insurrection to break out among the Bedouins a

Turkish Firman could afford our colonists as little protection as Turkish soldiers.

When Ibrahim Pacha was governor of Syria, he endeavoured to introduce several branches of industry : for example, the coal mines in Lebanon ; but after he was forced to leave the country, all this fell to the ground. He is accused, and I believe with justice, of having thinned the population by levying troops ; but the Turkish government has as much need of troops as Ibrahim, and the essential difference between it and the Egyptian is, not that it is more lenient and spares the people, but that it cannot enforce its commands in obtaining the number of troops required ; indeed every time that soldiers are levied there is an insurrection ; and the people look for one as a matter of course. A government without authority and power is in fact none at all, because it can neither repress evil nor encourage good ; it is a burden to the people, a puppet in the eyes of the multitude, and a means of unlawful gain to a few individuals.

But to proceed with our journey. We gradually descended the hill by very wretched paths, and our horses were obliged to skip like goats and balance themselves like rope dancers ; but the noble beasts acquitted themselves with great dexterity, though we were thoroughly shaken at every step. Plantations of fruit trees, and groups of poplars and willows, surrounding pretty hamlets are scattered like little

oases in the plain; yet they are mere specks in the wide spread valley, and neither the silver poplar nor the willow call forth joyous feelings: the heart, however, is gladdened by a sight of the fresh verdure, especially at the mill of Zachle, where we rested at half-past one and partook of some refreshment.

These trees and the little stream that turned the mill had quite a European aspect, but not so the people. Here the inhabitants are no longer Maronites, at least not exclusively, and we frequently met Arabs who saluted us with "Salám aleikum!" "Peace be with thee." Several of them approached us with much curiosity, to see how my companion lighted his cigar by means of the touch wood. The words and gesticulations of the men betrayed the utmost astonishment; but the women looked on with apparent indifference. Bystram gave away several cigars, and completed the marvel of their ignition among those who were not followers of Mahomet, or who did not observe the Ramadan in all its strictness; but they did not in the least understand the art of smoking, though they spoke with great satisfaction among themselves of havannas, and to my great surprise were acquainted with the native land of cigars.

At last a splendid looking man rode up to us, with a large black and white turban, flame coloured jacket with hanging sleeves, and enormously full plaited white pantaloons, having all the appearance



of an Arab prince. His bearing was high, and he remained mounted, looking down upon us with an earnest, dark brown, wrinkled countenance. There was something so majestic about him, that I saluted him in the oriental fashion; he seemed flattered, and returned the compliment, slightly bending forwards, and slowly laying his hand first upon his breast and then upon his forehead with a dignified, graceful reverence, such as no man in a black coat ever offered me. He received the cigar which Bystam presented to him, and immediately commenced smoking. When we resumed our journey he led the way, making his horse, which by the bye was not a fine one, parade before us, and rode with us about half a league to Kerak.

Here we visited Noah's tomb, as it is called, which is held in great veneration by the Mahometans. A fine edifice, the upper part of which resembles a mosque, encloses this most wonderful of all tombs; but if any portion of the ark lies buried in that interminably long, narrow, stone coffin, it must surely be the mast! Our Arab friend here left us, and we rode on till five o'clock, when we reached the village of Temnin which lies in the open plain. From its southern extremity rises the Djebela Shelkh, said to be the Hermon of Scripture. It is the highest point of the Lebanon and Anti-Libanus chain; and though a colossal eminence, it is in fact a shapeless mass, and is not distinguished from those

around it. We were now in the ancient *Cœlo Syria*, and I was all impatience for the coming morrow which was to bring me to *Baalbec*.

At length the day broke ; while we were making hasty preparations for our departure the women and children of *Temnin* assembled around us, though we had located ourselves without the village. They looked at me with inexpressible curiosity, examined my boots and gloves, and begged me to draw off the latter while they triumphantly showed me their hands, which were painted blue, and which they evidently thought much the prettiest. One of them examined my eye glass, while another drew a pin out of my hair. I became impatient of their importunity, and called to *Giorgio* to drive them away. He thundered at them with his powerful voice ; but they remained immoveable and told him that they would not go, for the sight of a Frankish female was quite a curiosity to them.

There is no doubt that European ladies have occasionally visited *Lebanon* ; but as the tent is pitched sometimes here and sometimes there, it is very possible that these women had really never seen one. I therefore patiently submitted to my fate, and the more readily forgave their curiosity because I was indulging in the same propensity in regard to them. I am resolved to discover the oriental beauties, with their gazelle eyes and fascinating grace, so exquisitely delineated in all the keepsakes by the burin of the artist, and so glowingly described by the pen of

the poet. Hitherto my search has been in vain: I have seen no beautiful women, except in Smyrna. The contour of the face is certainly different from ours; their features are sharper and more decided, hence there is something harsh and coarse in their countenance, and the formation of the mouth almost approaches to that of the brute creation. I have been fortunate enough always to see the women look cheerful; but when they are angry they must look like very furies. The absence of youthful countenances is very striking; you see only children and old women, while the intermediate age appears to be totally wanting.

Besides colouring their hands the women paint their bosom, which, in striking contrast to their half veiled faces, is quite uncovered; the favourite device, drawn in dark blue colours, seems to be a palm-tree in the centre, with a star on each breast. In the mountainous districts, the veiling of the face consists in merely raising the corner of the veil and holding it over the mouth, while walking abroad, or in the presence of men, a fashion which rather savours of coquetry, as their fine dark eyes are thereby seen to the greatest advantage, set off as they are by their broad eye-brows and long silken lashes. In my opinion these long soft eye-lashes are the only beauty which the women have to boast of.

After leaving Temnin we were five long hours in crossing the gradually rising plain, which, though a fine arable soil, retained throughout its treeless,

uncultivated character, till we reached Baalbec. About twelve o'clock we pitched our tent by the side of a fine walnut-tree, close to a little water mill, facing the ruins, and affording the finest view of the gigantic temple with its six wondrous columns, which, for the last hour and a half had already engaged our eager gaze. On this celebrated spot the God of the most ancient nations of the East,—the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Phœnicians—the God of Light, was ignorantly worshipped. The one, eternal, invisible God, whom all apprehend, whom none can conceive, whom all the religions of antiquity endeavoured to symbolize in order the better to comprehend: whom the Bible teaches us “to worship in spirit and in truth,” this mysterious Being was believed by those nations to be revealed under the veil of light. The most beneficial, genial, and vivifying of all lights was the sun, and hence the symbolising imagination of the ancient Orientals constituted that luminary, a God, which they worshipped under the image of Baal. The planet of the night they regarded as his sister and deified as Astarte, the Ashtaroth of the Bible. Thus also the Persians had their Mithras and Mylitta, and the Greeks their Helios and Diana.

Love and admiration of light—thirst and yearning for light—and the ultimate adoration of light, erected all these altars, built all these temples;—taught the Chaldean Magi, to worship the sun without altars, and the Ghebers to worship fire without

temples. Light! this has been the unsatiable yearning for thousands of years, and will be to the end of time. Light to the eye that it may behold beauty: light to the heart that it may be pure and true: light to the mind that it may possess knowledge! In Christ these were concentrated and he is emphatically called "the light of the world," and with the pure light of the heart, and the bright light of the mind he overcame the world. We too are called to overcome the world; but, alas! each one of us best knows, even when light has dawned upon his mind, what a world he has to overcome, before it shines with full radiance on his soul.

You may imagine, dear Emy, what solemn impressions filled my mind amidst these ruins where the veil of form, with which every religion invests itself, gradually became so dense and darkened, that the in-dwelling spirit could no longer penetrate it. The adoration of light degenerated into gross, sensual idolatry, a warning to all coming ages to cleave to the essence and not to the form; to the idea and not to the appearance. Form and appearance are frail and perishable, therefore imperfect and always needing renewal; and if the spirit which once animated them cannot be renewed, then they become ruins, though not always so beautiful as those of Baalbec.

The reign of those ancient divinities was already passed when these wondrous temples were erected for their worship. The Roman Republic had expired

on the trophies of the victories, which she left to her conquerors the Cæsars; and Syria was not the least of these trophies. The Romans not only permitted the vanquished nations to remain in the enjoyment of their customs, their laws and their religion, but they even honoured the worship of all their Gods and protected their temples and priests. The Christians alone did not experience this toleration; and why? In the faint clouds on the distant horizon, Rome already perceived the coming storms by which she was to be overthrown, and therefore she combatted Christianity with weapons of every kind. Among these was the splendour with which the Emperors of the second century endeavoured to invest the worship of the ancient divinities; and this tendency made the temples of Baalbec arise on the spot where the former edifice, dedicated to the sun, had stood. We went through the splendid lower vaulted passages of the gigantic temple, which, in the subterraneous compartments, might have served the priests for the performance of their mystic ceremonies, or for keeping the treasures of the temples. The ruins are throughout of Roman origin, even to the very foundations; and we discovered on a key stone of the vault the word "Divi;" the rest was illegible. The single blocks are bevelled all round with a border about two inches broad, which manner of treating the stone does not appear earlier than the time of the Roman Emperors, and tends to confirm the opinion of its probable

date.\* The enormous blocks of stone thirty feet in length, which form the foundation of the basement are it is true without this wrought border; but the workmanship is Roman, and as grand and solid as that of the Coliseum and the Pont du Gard.

The style of both the temples is the Corinthian, in all its beauty, and in the smaller of the two, the temple of the Sun, is in admirable preservation: wreaths and festoons, foliage and flowers, grapes and ears of corn, interspersed with dancing cupids and graceful forms, are scattered with such lavish prodigality over every part of this magnificent building, by the exhaustless and magic hand of art, that it might be deemed too rich and luxuriant, did we not call to mind that this Temple was consecrated to the Sun, and portrays the symbols of his wondrous influence. The elaborate and chiselled workmanship of the individual portions heighten the grand effect of the complete whole. The stone is worked as with a needle; and it is only from the precipitated fragments of the cornices and capitals that we really

\* Such was my impression at the time; but having since been in Greece, I have discovered my error. The subterraneous building of the Hecatomepedon at Athens was wrought in the same style; and when the Parthenon was erected on the site of this ancient temple, this lower structure was retained and enlarged by an additional building. This consists of unhewn stone, so that it is evident that stones thus wrought were used in Greece in the time of Pericles.

discern the massiveness of the blocks, and the extreme delicacy with which they are wrought.

As I do not know to what deity the second temple is dedicated,\* which is larger than any I have ever seen, namely 120 feet broad, and twice as long, I will designate it the Giant-Temple. Properly speaking, very little of this edifice is in perfect preservation, except the subterranean buildings of which I have already spoken. Its two colossal vestibules in the walls of which were niches for altars and deities, and from which the ascent into the temple was by a flight of steps, can readily be completed by the imagination, especially if it is lively enough to clear away the rubbish which fills the doors half way up.

Of the temple itself nothing is perfect save six columns; but these are of such a character that in gazing upon them we think not of ruins, but of some magic creation, whose destination none can tell. Slender as the cypress, bright as gold, they rise aloft and gracefully bear the well preserved architrave. They filled my soul with such a wonderful effect of harmony that they seemed like the chords of a lyre; and the unison between their form, and the heavens to which they aspired, between their colour and the sun which gilded them was so complete, that I should scarcely have marvelled had a melodious strain issued from them at

\* It was sacred to the Great Gods of Heliopolis.—T<sub>h</sub>.



the rising of the God of Day. The full blaze of noon in which we first beheld and examined these temples was not favourable to their grandeur. The stream of light above and around has the effect of compressing and lowering them, and they now appeared to me less majestic than while at a distance; but the lower the sun sunk in the west the more colossal they seemed to become.

We passed the whole day amid these ruins. Mohametans, Christians, Turks, Selucidæ, and Mongols, and above all the most fearful earthquakes have repeatedly visited this spot. The Emperor Theodosius converted the Temple of the Sun into a Christian church; the Saracens employed its stones in the building of a mosque; after ages reared an embattled fortification above the walls of the giant-temple; mountains of ruins and heaps of rubbish have been precipitated and piled in chaotic masses by the convulsions of nature; and yet, in spite of all these desolations, the residue stands forth in imperishable glory.

In the village a small temple of Vesta, circular, like all those dedicated to this goddess, is converted into a stall for goats; it is overladen with ornament, and indicates the heavy architecture of the age of Constantine. About half an hour before reaching Baalbec, I saw eight truncated columns of the finest Egyptian granite: they had been set up, and blocks of stone laid upon them by way of architrave to give the whole the appearance of a temple; but

it was in bad taste and looked trifling. The existence of granite columns in this place is, however, remarkable, because the only building material met with in this neighbourhood comes from the lime stone quarries at Anti-Libanus, which are quite close to Baalbec, and where we saw immense blocks hewn and ready for building, waiting for transportation.

The natural beauties of Baalbec are confined to a few large walnut trees, and a beautiful streamlet of delicious water, which turned the little mill near us. The village itself, like all those in Syria consists of an irregular agglomeration of square clay huts with flat roofs; and the total absence of gardens, trees, and flowers gives them a most desolate appearance. When there are gardens they always lie beyond the villages, and sometimes at a considerable distance from them; but they are never found in the village or attached to the dwellings in which, to my mind, their chief attraction consists.

Early the next morning I hastened to the ruins, to behold the sun rising upon them as I had seen him set the evening before: it was a wondrous scene, and now I understood the fable of Memnon's melodious statue! Meanwhile the tent had disappeared on the bank of the stream, the horses were saddled; and—we were forced to leave. Yes! I exclaimed, Baal is fallen! But the eternal God of light lives for ever, and guides our foolish hearts as

surely as the glorious sun guides our little darksome world.

Throughout the weary way across the Anti-Libanus, my thoughts were buried amid the ruins of that fallen world—of the heathen God of light and heat. While thus musing, the fable of Tithon and Aurora was suddenly unravelled. She was an undying Goddess, while the youth she loved so deeply and so truly, was mortal. She besought for him of Jupiter the boon of immortality, and Jupiter granted her desire. But alas! not eternal youth, not imperishable vigour, had Aurora besought for her beloved. He was indeed immortal, but his earthly frame faded away, and in the arms of the Goddess of eternal youth, reclined the aged Tithon. Aurora is time. She has seen many a Tithon grow old and grey who she fondly thought was immortal, and over whom for a short season, she rejoiced in the prime of his beauty. When this fleeting moment is expired, immortality indeed is his, as it is that of a ruin, a thought, a lesson, a deed; but he himself irrevocably fades away, in obedience to the fiat of earthly decay. And do we not all, like Aurora, too fondly cherish some fading Tithon, some idea—some remembrance—some idol? Who has the happiness to say, No! who has the courage to say, Yes?

Thoughts like these make one solemn; nay, so awfully solemn that sometimes, quite overpowered,

I cover my face with my hand to chase away these feelings, and involuntarily exclaim—Can I yet smile? But mine is a solemn journey: everywhere the present and the past stand side by side, like the little mud hovels by the side of the ruins of Baalbec: those the most miserable—these the most glorious in the world. All admonish us of Aurora and Tithon.

Lebanon is inhabited by 80,000 Maronites, and Anti-Libanus chiefly by the Druses, who were at one time possessors of the whole mountain. The Druses are an inconsiderable, mysterious people, of whom little is known, except that they are wild and warlike, and neither Mahometans nor Christians. Whether they worship false gods, or are without any religion whatever, as some suppose, is not known with any degree of certainty, as they are very reserved in their intercourse with strangers. Al-Haken, the Fatima caliph, who flourished from 996 to 1021, is regarded as the prophet of the Druses. He was a wild, half-witted fanatic, who gave himself out as the founder of a new religion. If a Druse embraces the Christian faith, (a circumstance of rare occurrence—though it occasionally happens through the influence of the Greek and Maronite congregation and convents with which they are surrounded) he observes the most inviolable secrecy respecting his former religion. A handsome young Druse, the waiter at Battista's Inn at Beyrout, who was baptised three

years ago, interested us much on account of his origin; but there was about as much hope of making a stone wall speak as of inducing him to say a word.

There are many Greek communities in this neighbourhood—and in Baalbec there is even a bishop. At Zachle, and also in the village of Zebdani, where we pitched our tent, we were told there was a Greek monastery; but as those belonging to Heathens, Christians and Mahometans are very similar, it is difficult to distinguish one from the other by their external appearance.

Above the stone bridge we rode into the Anti-Libanus range, along the declivity of the mountain, enjoying a fine view into the large, extensive valley which was bounded on the south by the mighty Djebel Sheikh, and in the north, seemed to lose itself amid hills in the plain. After travelling three hours, the narrow ridge became more steep and rugged, and the loose stony zigzag path so unsafe, that, for the first time, I preferred trusting to the security of my own foot to that of my horse. Had I been on the mountain-top of the Grimsel or the Wormser Joch, I might have expected to meet with this wilderness, destitute alike of vegetation, human life, and water, but certainly not here, where a strange and melancholy loneliness rested upon all.

It was refreshing to descend into a mountain gorge, through which meandered a brook, covering the banks of its narrow channel with verdure, and

clothing the shrubs and bushes with bright and cheerful green. This limpid brook is the source of the Barrada, the Pharphar of Scripture, which carries fruitfulness and fertility to the gardens of Damascus; we welcomed it again and again in the course of our journey, after leaving it, to make shorter cuts over the mountain ridges, where its windings would have led us too far about. I should not be at all surprised if the Druses worship water; for in these countries it is the very essence of life and fertility. Wherever there is a drop of water, flowers and grass immediately spring up around it; and wherever a stream flows, the most luxuriant vegetation and umbrageous foliage gladden the eye. The soil is good, but the fertilizing element is wanting. Desolateness characterizes the region; yonder side of the Anti-Libanus lies the boundless Syrian desert with the ruins of Palmyra, and which extends as far as the distant Euphratés.

After a short halt we proceeded from one defile to another, along the dry stony beds of the wild mountain torrents, which flow only in winter. They were not entirely barren, for a species of oak, which attains only the height of a shrub, and is used in dyeing, thrives amid the boulders. The stunted trees, together with the piercing wind and chilly atmosphere, imparted a very northerly character to these hollows. I should have fancied myself in the Jura Mountains rather than in Anti-Libanus, had we not met large bands of mounted Arabs, all armed

and wearing enormous turbans and gaily coloured clothing. They greatly enlivened the tedium of our journey, and gave us not a moment's uneasiness, for they suffered us to pass on quietly, without offering us either molestation or greeting.

The government, in order to prevent the interruption of commercial intercourse, has compelled all the Sheikhs of this neighbourhood (*i. e.* the Elders, who, as in the patriarchal times, are still the heads of their tribes) to acknowledge the joint pecuniary responsibilities of all the villages, so that they must make common reparation if travellers or caravans are robbed. Here, where they all have settled dwellings in their villages, and subsist on the produce of their gardens and fields, the government may find means to oblige them to observe this discipline, and hence a traveller may proceed with safety; but among the Bedouins, (the shepherds and the nomade tribes), these means are unavailing, for if they are called to account, they hastily take down their tent and flee to the desert.

The Turkish soldiers have, moreover, such fear of the Bedouins that in the event of any hostile attack they would not make a stand; hence whenever parties need protection, it is invariably found expedient to seek that of the Bedouins themselves, through their Sheikh, or, in plain English, to purchase it. We were anxious to proceed direct from Damascus to Nazareth, and thereby to avoid the great detour to Beyrout; but, while there, we were informed that the

interior of the country was in too unquiet a state to admit of it, and this unwelcome intelligence has been confirmed since our arrival at Damascus. We must therefore abandon this cherished plan, for as the powerful Bedouin tribe—the Gerasi on the west side of Jordan, is at enmity with its neighbours, we might easily come between two fires. Of all this, however, we had as yet nothing to fear; quite the contrary, we were everywhere welcomed with the greatest eagerness, mingled with a large proportion of curiosity.

As we rode through gardens into the village of Zebdani, where the inhabitants were seated in groups at their doors, enlivening their long Ramadan with cheerful conversation, we were urgently pressed to pitch our tent in the small open space in the centre of the village, in order that they might the better observe all our ways and doings. But as neither their vicinity, nor that of their houses was at all desirable, on account of the vermin, we rode to the other end of the village, and halted amid the ruins of a little mosque on the banks of an arm of the Barrada.

Silver poplars stood by the side of the rivulet, and bushes of wild roses and blackberries formed a shady hedge. It had a cheerful, European aspect, and reminded me of home; but I am unable to enter into the enthusiasm with which Zebdani and its orchards have been extolled. It is true, Zebdani is



a large village, it has extensive orchards—which are enclosed with hedges ; but I certainly did not cross the sea, and the mountains of Lebanon to admire poplars and blackberries ! Our Saxon and Silesian villages are far more verdant, much neater and better built, and I should have had no need to perform a pilgrimage over a wilderness of stone, had I been in search of beauties of this kind. To find Zebdani enchanting appears to be considered inseparable from a journey across Lebanon. I have given you a faithful picture of it, and you may admire it or not as you please.

We had scarcely alighted from our horses at half-past four, when the Sheikh Abdallah, the chief of a neighbouring village, entered Zebdani at the opposite side. He was dressed in a dark red mantle and white turban, and was riding on a camel, his attendants being seated on horseback. He was received with every demonstration of respect ; that is to say, the men fired their guns, and the women set up a piercing cry of joy. This peculiar tremulous shout is called *zugarit*, and is more shrill than the sound of a trumpet. About twenty paces from our tent, by the side of the rivulet, stood a deserted khan, in front of which was a splendid sycamore, whose lower sweeping branches formed a kind of arbour. Here the Sheikh took up his quarters for the night ; a superb carpet being spread on the ground to form both his seat and his couch. As the restrictions of the Ramadan forbade his eating

or smoking till after sunset, he seated himself with perfect ease upon the carpet, and took no notice either of the villagers or of our party.

When the women had exhausted themselves with shrieking a welcome to their exalted visitor, they turned their attention to me. I was, however, soon heartily tired of their importunity and incessant teasing to unbutton and take off my gloves. I therefore retired into my tent to arrange my hair, and secured the entrance, which was scarcely three paces from the stream. This was more than they could bear : they endeavoured to peep through the chinks, and pressed forward with such violence that the stakes of the tent gave way and they tumbled over the cords. I called Giorgio to my assistance, and in their backward evolutions, a boy tumbled into the water ; but this only afforded them fresh cause for laughter ; and their curiosity was so little damped that the next morning they assembled in a complete crowd to see us start, and “Salam ! Salam !” was re-echoed on all sides. A lion, a real lion—not “a London Lion !” would not cause a greater commotion, if introduced among a number of fashionables in one of our drawing-rooms, than a European lady among these uncivilised Arab women.

Rain had fallen during the night, and it was still mizzling a good deal at seven o'clock yesterday morning, when we commenced our last day's journey. It was rather a fatiguing one, for we rested only half an hour at noon, and did not arrive at the gate of

Damascus till five o'clock ; but, with the exception of the first day, it was the most interesting part of our excursion. On leaving Zebdani we again passed through gardens where cows and goats were browsing on vine leaves and the tender shoots of the mulberry trees. The plantations are intersected by numerous narrow channels supplied by rain ; but farther on the soil becomes marshy, and cultivation ceases. The Barrada seems to lose itself in a swamp, but it merely makes a bend, breaks through the mountain, and falls in a beautiful cascade into a deep ravine, which it traverses in its whole length.

The road, which follows the course of the river, is in some respects artificial, and in one part is supported by a wall, while in others, it is cut through the declivity of the mountain. At the rocky pass, El Sak, a good safe bridge is thrown from one bank to the other. This pass is remarkable for its numerous caves, which have regular entrances hewn, at a considerable height, in its steep calcareous sides. Some of these entrances are supported by rude pilasters, while others are ornamented with architectural designs. I am told that the Arabs leave their clay-huts in the winter, and seek shelter in these caves from the cold, which is doubtless very severe in the mountain villages. It is, however, difficult to conceive how they can get into these nests without wings, for the rocky walls are quite perpendicular, unless, indeed, the caves have some secret entrance. It is certain that in ancient times they had another

destination; they were sepulchres, and have been transformed by necessity from abodes of the dead to dwellings of the living.

The country now assumed more and more the character of desert and oasis. The mountains, along whose declivities we proceeded, seemed to be petrified sand-stone, and presented a dreary, barren aspect to their very summits. But when we looked down, and the projecting rocks did not conceal from our view the windings of the Barrada, how striking was the contrast! The silver poplars and the walnut-trees waved and rustled so invitingly below, and their splendid emerald verdure was so refreshing to the eye, that we longed to descend and walk under their cool shade. It is most unaccountable that not a single village is built in this beautiful hollow; they are all perched on the bare stony declivity, so that the inhabitants not only dwell most uncomfortably, but likewise have the trouble of carrying up all the water, and driving their cattle down to pasture under the trees. I can only account for it by supposing that the air along the banks of the river must either be unhealthy or be esteemed so, as the people here are very cautious in this particular. Our tent, too, was never pitched under a tree, nor even on a grass-plot, for the nightly dew is said to render the exhalations of the plants injurious to health, and this caution is probably founded on experience.

On reaching the summit of a mountain, we be-

held a boundless arid plain stretched out at our feet; but from the midst of its yellowish dust-coloured surface, rose an extensive verdant oasis, glittering with cupolas and minarets; this was Damascus, surrounded by its gardens and plantations of apricots. Yet it has neither a grand nor a picturesque appearance, though it looks pleasant and fertile. The Barrada, on quitting its mountain cradle, and entering the plain, divides into seven small branches which irrigate and fertilize the gardens, but the beauty of the landscape is gone; for the meandering stream disappears, and nothing remains but a desert, an orchard, and the faint outline of Anti-Libanus. Such, my dear Emy, is in strict truth, the appearance of Damascus!

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## LETTER XXII.

### TO MY MOTHER.

Damascus — General external appearance — Interior of the Houses — Israelitish women — Bazars—Cafées—Minarets—The Old Castle—The Seraglio of the Pacha—Salahieh.

Damascus, October 15th, 1843.

You can scarcely conceive, my dear mother, what were my feelings as I entered the gate of Damascus. I had heard so much of the fanatic disposition of the inhabitants, of their hatred to Christians, the small number of European residents, and the rare

visits of travellers, especially ladies, that I felt extremely uncomfortable ; and though I said nothing and endeavoured to conceal my feelings, I was very much agitated.

It was about five o'clock on Friday, the Mahometan Sabbath, and all the people were in motion, impatiently awaiting the firing of the cannon which was to announce their liberty to enjoy themselves. Crowds were flocking to the coffee-houses, bakers, and other provision shops, in order that food, drink, and pipes might be at hand the moment the signal was given. The chief places of concourse were the bazars, where everything of the kind is offered for sale. These bazars are very narrow and dirty, and differ only from the confined streets, by having rotten boards and poles thrown across from the opposite roofs, and covered with torn straw mats, rags of carpets, old clothes, &c. This is a bazar, and such is the half of Damascus.

Immediately on passing through the city gate, we entered one of these bazars, which was so narrow that I had the greatest difficulty to keep my feet from touching the enormous turbans of the pedestrians on my left ; their only place of refuge was by the side of the counter in the houses, or rather mean wooden booths, not very unlike cupboards ; our pack-horses completely blocked up the way, as the luggage projected on either side ; and then there was such a commotion ! Even in bright day-

light it is dark in these odious bazars, to say nothing of the evening.

However, we at length arrived at the house of the Prussian Consul, to whom the consul-general at Beyrout had written, requesting him to assist me in finding some place of abode; for though Damascus can boast of what is called an inn, it is a very indifferent one, and we were not sure whether the Franciscan convent would admit a lady. But, to my dismay, the Consul was from home; and his wife had not heard either of a letter or any expected travellers, and I at once concluded that the communication had not arrived. We had no alternative but to turn back and try our fortune at the Franciscan convent, and, to our annoyance, had again to pass through the detestable bazars. Here, too, the Padre Guardiano was absent on business, but his worthy procurator undertook to direct us to some place of shelter; men have no difficulty of this kind, as they are lodged at the convent; but with us helpless women the case is altogether different.

While we were waiting, the Consul arrived, and confirmed our surmise that no letter had reached him. He was soon followed by the head of the convent, a cheerful little old man, a Spaniard by birth, who heartily bid us welcome, and placed at our disposal the whole of the Casa Nova. This name is given to the quarters which are attached to every convent belonging to the Terra Santa, for the

accommodation of strangers, travellers, and pilgrims. This building is not under the roof of the convent, but always close to its precincts.

Escorted by the Consul, his kavass, and a dragoman of the convent, we proceeded thither in grand style, with lights borne before us, but again through a bazar! This public procession was made in deference to the opinion of the world, for it would have been thought unseemly if a woman had disappeared within the precincts of the convent. Now, however, we feel more at liberty, and always go through the convent, one of the corridors of which terminates in front of the Casa Nova. As the Casa Nova has only two compartments—rooms they cannot be called—the whole is not too large for our party. Miserable as my apartment was, I was heartily glad to be under shelter. A long day's journey on horse-back, succeeded by considerable anxiety of mind, added to the annoyance of the last two hours,—during which I had to carry on a conversation with the brothers of the convent, the Guardiano, and the Consul, in Spanish and Italian, neither of which I understand,—had so completely exhausted me, that I was quite thankful when I found myself alone in my own room. The obliging friars offered to board us, but we declined, as this would only have given them needless trouble, and our own provisions are infinitely better dressed by Giorgio.

Considering the misadventures of the preceding



evening, we are in a tolerable condition ; but it is only tolerable ! Damascus is not the place where, as soon as you have left a miserable shelter, you forget that it is miserable. There is so little worth seeing here, nothing in short, except the interiors of the residences of the opulent ; for you may wander throughout the whole of this large wide-spreading city, without meeting with a single interesting object, for the celebrated Mosque of the Omiades is closed with rigorous severity against Christians. You go on and on through one narrow lane after another—streets they cannot be called, for the houses almost meet—turn corner after corner : here you tread upon a living dog, there upon a dead rat, or you stumble into a hole in the ground, and all the while you see nothing before, behind, and around you, but clay walls with little low doors, and at every ten steps, a window barricaded with thick wooden bars. If you turn into a bazar, you can positively see nothing, for here all is dark ; and if your eye becomes gradually accustomed to the darkness, and you stand still at one of the booths to make a purchase, you are instantly surrounded by a crowd of inquisitive people, who so completely throng you that you are thankful to make your escape.

In the whole large city of Damascus there is not one open space—not a single spot where you can breathe freely or enjoy the fresh air. Everywhere you are encompassed by clay walls, and these walls, the houses, the roofs, the people, the animals,—

everything in short, is covered with dust. Your dress has a train of dust, a foot deep, your shoes and stockings are dust colour; if you accidentally brush against a man or a wall, a layer of dust covers your mantilla; if you go through a bazar the dust showers down upon you from above;—in short, Damascus is at this season neither more nor less than a dry, dusty, clay pit in which innumerable, narrow paths and passages have been dug.

Such, in sober earnest, Damascus appears to me. But now comes the surprise! It is as great, as if a fairy were to lead you to a molehill and say: "What seest thou?" and you reply peevishly "A molehill!" Then she touches it with her wand and says; "Go in, what seest thou now?"—"Now—oh now I see a fairy palace!"—My fairy is the good Consul. He is as kind and attentive to me, as if I had brought him fifty letters of introduction, and as if he thought of nothing else but my amusement. This is the more obliging as I have not even the claim of a countrywoman, for he is a native of Syria, and is descended from an Italian, Israelitish family; but he has been mindful of the injunction of the great law-giver. "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." And truly I feel an alien and a stranger in the precincts of Damascus.

The object of the greatest interest, as I have before observed, is the interior of the houses; but as these belong to private individuals it is not always

easy to obtain admission ; the Consul, however, did me the kindness to pave the way. Yesterday morning at an early hour, his kavass arrived at the Casa Nova. He is an exquisite of the first water, dresses in a different costume every day, and is always accompanied by his Moorish servant. He follows us at every step like a shadow, for our protection, or rather I should say, he walks close before us, touching the pavement with his silver headed cane, to notify to the passengers that they are to make way. He wandered like a sun before us yesterday through the dismal bazar, clad in a rich flame coloured cloth, ornamented with gold lace, and a keffijeh wrought with gold twisted round his turban, while his Moor steered his course behind him like an eclipsed moon.

I paid my respects to the lady of the Consul, and then accompanied this hospitable family to their friends and acquaintances, to inspect the interior of their splendid mansions. As the commerce between Europe and Damascus is carried on chiefly by Israelite merchants, I should infer from the appearance of their dwellings and the costly dress of their wives, that it is very lucrative, although the Consul assured me that mercantile houses, like those in Europe, were not to be found in the Levant. There is so little ready money in circulation, that the capital is placed out at 25 per cent., and where the security is very good, at 18. Large money transactions cannot be made ; and ac-

cording to our notions trade is carried on in a very singular manner. The merchant does not confine himself to one particular article of commerce, as silks, cottons, porcelain, or jewellery, but he imports from Europe almost everything which finds a ready sale in the Levant, and disposes of the individual articles wholesale to small merchants and tradesmen.

Yesterday being the Jewish sabbath, we had an opportunity of seeing the ladies in their best attire, which is certainly very splendid. The head dress is adorned with natural flowers, and entwined with a wreath of diamonds; two or three large drops of emerald fall over the forehead, while the hair flows in curls and ringlets over the shoulders and waist, or is plaited in innumerable little braids, each of which has a small gold coin fastened at the point. Sometimes these plaits are made of silk as a substitute for false hair, which is very generally worn by the ladies. Several rows of beautiful pearls are suspended round their necks; but I never saw any of a very large size.

The costume is Oriental; wide pantaloons, long, open skirt and tight boddice, cut very low in front and pinched at the waist, the chemisette or tucker being of transparent gossamer. The most violent contrasts are preferred. One of the ladies wore cherry-coloured pantaloons, a skirt of white cambric embroidered with a border of coloured silk and gold, a satin boddice of bright green, and a

striped Persian shawl tied round the waist ; another wore pantaloons of a bright citron, a rose-coloured petticoat and a black velvet boddice, while a third was dressed in an entire suit of sky blue fringed with gold, set off with a superb purple shawl by way of girdle.

Perhaps you will say this does not sound amiss, and still less so when I add that the majority of the women are very pretty ; and yet whenever they approached me, my first sensation was that of slight repugnance. They paint themselves so odiously ! Their eyebrows of a jet black, curved as a Byzantine arch, below the under eyelid a black stripe which extends to the temple ; their cheeks of a pretty red, but very unlike the glowing hue of nature.

Beneath this disfigurement of paint the countenance has to be sought out. The contour of their figures is completely spoilt by their compressed busts and the thick shawl wound round their waists, and what makes them appear yet more stiff and even awkward is the custom of walking upon kabkabs ; these are low stilts or foot stools, made of wood, inlaid with mother o' pearl, about a foot high and fastened with a leather strap to the ancle. Upon these they walk about in the house, whether it be to keep their dress from trailing on the ground, to add to their height, or to save their feet from touching the cold marble halls, I cannot say. Upon these kabkabs, they even contrive to walk up and down stairs, an effort which requires no little dexterity ;

yet for all this, it is most ungraceful. The foot must always be put out straight, and the knee stiffened, otherwise off falls this barbarous machine, the clatter of which is besides intolerable ; far different to the quiet noiseless step which seems to belong to a graceful woman decked with pearls and diamonds. When first I saw them I involuntarily thought of clodhoppers. One of these ladies, very tall and stout, and by no means pretty, dressed in the gayest colours, with a yellow shawl round her waist, which set off her large figure to the utmost disadvantage, towering above all the men, and clattering with her kabkabs, approached me very majestically. I was quite overcome ! It was for all the world as if the queen of chess were stalking towards me the whole length of the chess board ; and, thought I, shall I take a Bishop's leap and get out of her way ? The sight was all too overpowering !

As it is indispensable to accustom your eye to the dark before you can distinguish the objects around you, so, when standing opposite these ladies, you must overcome their violent contrasts of brilliant colours before it is at all possible to discover their features. When my eyes were no longer dazzled by the glare, I was delighted to find that I was surrounded by pretty faces. The features of the youthful females are very soft and delicate, and though they assume a sharpness with age, they never lose their delicacy. The profile from the forehead to the nose is particularly beautiful. Their

eyes are disfigured by the painting around them ; they may be beautiful, but to me they were not attractive ; they are neither eloquent in silence nor animated in conversation. A salutation is made by touching the lip with the tips of the fingers of the right hand, laying them on the heart, and then mutually shaking hands ; the ladies make these movements lightly and quickly in the air ; but I, as a true German, cordially laid my hand on their painted fingers glittering with diamonds, and could not help thinking how much neater was the look of a Parisian glove.

We took our seats on a broad divan ; and the lady of the house, according to the Oriental custom, waited upon her guests, presenting each with lemonade and confectionary, and then with a transparent napkin worked in silk and fringed with gold, which we passed over our lips. Pipes were not offered as it was the Sabbath, on which the Israelites are not permitted to light a fire ; on other days the ladies smoke as well as the men, and generally use Persian nargileh. Here I can easily understand a woman's smoking : they are compelled to resort to it, to while away the time ; and, indeed, if I were obliged to sit in my court at Damascus by the side of a fountain, under oleander and orange trees, decked in diamonds at 11 o'clock in the morning, with my hands before me, I am sure that in less than a year I should have recourse to the same antidote against ennui. Their days flow

on from year to year just as I have described it. The life of these wealthy females is perhaps the most easy and free from care in the world ; their husbands lavish upon them diamonds, pearls, and costly shawls, to their heart's content, while they in return do the honours of his house with cold politeness. Some of them have a very imposing appearance ; and one especially in a gorgeous, yet chastely elegant attire looked so queen-like and beautiful, that the fair Esther in the Court of Ahasuerus seemed to move before me.

The interior of the houses was not less striking than the appearance of their inmates. On entering the house-door we had to pass through a narrow, dark, covered, zigzag passage, which led to an uncovered quadrangle paved with variegated marbles and surrounded by the different apartments, quite irregularly arranged. Here is the open Liwan, or alcove, there a flight of steps leading to a terrace, and on the other side again the entrance into a splendidly furnished saloon. Arbours of jessamine, roses, oleander, citron, and orange trees, rise from the marble floor, in the centre of which plays a copious fountain in a marble basin, spreading a delicious coolness around.

The apartments are very high and the windows close to the ceiling, by which means they are lighted from above and are very cool in summer. The ceiling is of wood, richly painted, gilt and inlaid with mother o' pearl. The doors are similarly ornamented with great taste, and conceal cupboards built in the walls



all round the room. Sometimes these little recesses have no doors, and form arched niches decorated with the most elaborate and beautiful carvings. The floors are covered with carpets and straw mats ; and the part next to the entrance is always considerably lower than that on which the divan is placed.

At this step or platform the ladies leave their kabkabs and the servants their shoes, as the latter always enter barefooted and the former in gay morocco slippers. These slippers are again often left in front of the divan, for the ladies usually draw up their feet and seat themselves in the oriental fashion. No room has more than one door, and this generally leads either into the open air or into the Liwan. To form the most correct notion of the Liwan, you must fancy yourself in a very large alcove, raised a step, which, however, is not attached to one of the apartments, but to the quadrangle itself, whence you can always enjoy the fresh air, water and flowers, while reclining on your sofa, and are at the same time able to overlook the whole house as nobody can come in or go out without passing through this quadrangle.

Two of the most elegant houses which we visited had a forecourt, around which the domestic offices and the apartments for the servants were situated, and beyond this the inner court or quadrangle, with the Liwan. We went into five houses, all of which were constructed on a similar plan, differing only in the extent of the building, and the richness of the

carved work and other ornaments. The most splendid is that inhabited by the English Consul, who has arranged it in the most comfortable manner, and filled it with European furniture. In the other houses, besides the divans and carpets, I saw only large chests made of pine-wood, studded with brass nails; this is the genuine oriental style. Here and there stood a rush bottomed chair, and I was going to add a table, but I just recollect that I have only met with one, a dining-table; which was at the residence of the Prussian Consul. The only articles of foreign furniture in these houses are the chairs.

The British Consul has converted his quadrangle into an actual flower parterre. Everything is more congenial and comfortable; the house is the largest I have seen, and does not look nearly so empty as the rest. It is animated by another spirit, a spirit which claims affinity with the arts and sciences. There we find books, prints, and maps; and the thousand little elegancies of refined life, which, though they are the offspring of indulgence and luxury, are nevertheless tokens of advanced civilization. The British Consul, who with the single exception of the Austrian diplomatist, is the only educated man in Damascus, assured me that the mind deteriorates in the remote East, and that the few ideas which the European may bring with him are soon lost; nor can any originality of mind be developed, still less enlarged, as it is neither called

forth, nor brought into contact with surrounding objects. Truly, my dear mother, I had rather live in a simple German cottage, than in one of these splendid Damascene dwellings, with their beauteous princesses of a thousand and one nights.

The residence erected in the last century by Assaad Pacha, is said to surpass every other in magnificence; but as the present occupant is a Turk, it is difficult to obtain admittance, and very few strangers are permitted to see it; the Consul, however, has promised to take me there to-morrow. A khan erected by the same Pacha, in the last century, is the finest public building in Damascus. In Constantinople the khan is, at the same time, a coffee house and an inn for travelling merchants; in Syria it is a little village inn; but this khan is both a bazar and an exchange. It is really sumptuous. The spacious square court has a large fountain in the centre, and is surrounded by three finely-proportioned arcades, surmounted by nine cupolas, the whole constructed of alternate layers of black and white stone, elegant as a saloon and commodious as a market-place. Here business is transacted, and the principal merchants have their stores and counting-houses all round; but on the sabbath they are of course closed.

The fashion of facing buildings with alternate stripes of black and white, which we meet with in Italy in the ancient domes of Monza, Sienna and others, is here pretty general, with this difference,

however, that in Italy they are of marble, while here they are only of stone. Several minarets are in this style, but they are all heavy and entirely devoid of that graceful lightness which characterizes those at Constantinople, and compensates for the want of architectural ornament.

Of the celebrated mosque of the Omiades I am not able to speak, as I was not permitted to see the interior. We were taken to a coffee-house, the owner of which conducted us to the top of his roof, and then along those of several of his neighbours, till we succeeded in obtaining a view of the fore-court and the cupolas, which are not at all remarkable. The great bazar, with its many dark avenues of shops, encompasses the mosque, and we saw that there were several doors communicating with it, which were standing wide open. Accordingly when we afterwards passed through the bazars, we very much wished to stand still awhile at these doors to get a distant peep at the interior ; but our Sun with his satellite continued his course without stopping, and the dragoman told us that the people did not like strangers to look at it.

As all eastern nations believe in "the evil eye," they are perhaps afraid lest Christians should annihilate their mosque with a look ; otherwise their exclusiveness seems unaccountable. We met with the most absurd charms for the evil eye, and I remember having seen over a house-door in Scutari, a hare's head with a lobster's claw ; which was sup-

posed to render this house secure against it. It is not always your enemy who is endowed with the evil eye; your friend may harm you, if he has the misfortune to be afflicted with it. This superstition extends as far as Italy, where the Gettatura is the universal talisman against 'the evil eye.'

From the roofs of the houses we also had a view of the old palace, a pile of heavy ruins, beside which a solitary, downcast palm, keeps watch. The crusaders and Mongols may have lived there:—this, on a close inspection of the building seems probable; but, that caliphs should have dwelt there is incredible to those who, like myself, have a vivid remembrance of the Spanish palaces, the Alhambra, and the Alcanza in Seville.

We returned late in the afternoon to the Casa Nova, where the Padre Guardiano paid us another visit; he is a good-tempered, chatty old man, and I look upon his truly benevolent countenance with delight, while he is talking away with great animation. There are seven Franciscans in this convent, which belongs to the Terra Santa. Their occupations consist in the daily celebration of the complicated service of their church, which is frequented by the resident Roman Catholics; the care of a school for boys and girls, who are taught in Arabic, and seem to amuse themselves amazingly at the same time; and lastly, in giving instruction in that language to the brethren who have arrived from Europe, and who are destined for the East. It seems almost

unaccountable that any one can come all the distance from Spain to Damascus, to undertake the humble vocation of teaching little children to read; but these men seem really interested in the work, and the natural and primitive simplicity with which they follow their calling, delighted me much. Their unpretending convents, which were much oppressed till Imbash, as the old Padre called Ibrahim Pacha, governed Syria, are the only monuments of the times of the Crusades.

There is also a Lazarite convent, in which there are, however, only two monks. The convent of the Capuchins fell with the fatal murder of Father Thomas. The Guardiano said he would stake his life, that the deed had been committed by the Jews, and grounded his conviction on the popular tradition of bygone centuries:—that they made use of Christian blood in their religious ceremonies. The middle ages of Europe gave birth to this unfounded tale, partly in consequence of fanatic hatred, and partly by means of consequent persecutions, to obtain possession of the wealth of the Jews, which was fondly believed to rival in many instances, the treasures of an Eldorado. The Turk, however, with his fanatic hatred towards other creeds, is animated by that dark spirit; the rapacity of men in power is great, and hence it was always worth the attempt to accuse the Jews of a crime, in order to extort from them a ransom, or to confiscate their property. The conversation at the Prussian Consul's

had turned upon this melancholy subject in the morning, and he expressed himself calmly and deliberately, as one who looked upon the crime as a total impossibility. I was very anxious to bring my old Padre over to the same conviction; but as I have never *thought* upon such subjects in foreign languages, I found it impossible to *speak* of them; hence I was soon compelled to exclaim, "He olvidado el Español e dimenticato l'italiano." This, however, does not disturb our good understanding.

Early this morning we set out on an extensive perambulation of the city. I could not become reconciled to the fact that Damascus is really devoid of all monuments of fine Arabic architecture, yet so it is. All the buildings, both ancient and modern, are of clay freestone in large square blocks, which become hardened by the action of the atmosphere; even the city walls are built of this material. At the gates we sometimes see large hewn stones, but these are always of Roman workmanship; I have not met with any Arabic ornament, or Arabic elegance, whether on a fountain, or a minaret. Either all has vanished since the Turkish conquest, or, what I think is more probable, the Spanish Arabian, from their constant intercourse with the Christian Gothic Spaniards, attained a much higher degree of civilization and refinement, which very unequivocally manifests itself in their buildings.

What shall I tell you of the wretched coffee-houses

whither we were conducted, that we might "enjoy a fine prospect," which consisted in a view of the small muddy brook, which flowed sluggishly between poplar bushes along the wall? Or what shall I say of the garden of the Pacha adjoining his residence, which is designated with the proud name of the Seraglio? A garden in which we gazed on each other in mute astonishment, for besides cabbages, nothing flourished in it, save marygolds and cocks-combs! More interesting, though wholly apocryphal, are the house of Ananias, which has been converted into a small chapel, in the street called straight; the spot (now lying between gardens) where St. Paul had the vision, and heard the voice saying unto him, "Why persecutest thou me!" and the wall, where after his conversion, the disciples took him by night and let him down in a basket.

In our rambles in one of the suburbs, we saw the celebrated ancient plane tree, the trunk of which is forty feet in circumference, the vigorous branches of which are covered with the most verdant foliage; we likewise passed the numerous burying places and sepulchres of celebrated mystic doctors and saints whose chief school was at Damascus. But we could not venture to stop long at them, for the passers by looked at us with evident displeasure, and the Kavass shook his head. I cannot tell you, my dear mother, what a painful sensation was excited in my breast when I found myself condemned and excluded on account of my faith. We returned through endless



bazars, the number of which prove the commercial character of Damascus. Commodities of a similar kind are always sold in the same row;—thus in one street are kabkabs of all sizes and heights, from the most common to the most elegantly inlaid; in another, children's red morocco shoes; here, turbans; there again, every description of chests and boxes studded with metal nails; while here again, are caftans of the most brilliant colours. I have purchased one for my brother, who will probably wear it as a dressing-gown; there is nothing peculiar about it, but the cut of the hanging sleeve, and the fact that it was made by a tailor of Damascus.

I was extremely incommoded in the bazars by numbers of inquisitive women crowding about me. They were effectually veiled, for according to the universal custom in Syria they were covered from head to foot by an enormous white cambric veil, and wore a thin coloured silk handkerchief hanging over their faces. They looked such ghost-like figures, that they really made me shudder when I first saw them. When the wife and daughters of the Consul accompanied me yesterday, they also threw just such a thick veil over their diamonds and shawls. The intercourse between the two sexes is quite unconstrained; but the Arabian custom does not permit a woman, whether Mahometan, Jewess, or Christian, to appear unveiled in the streets.

We visited the Greek Church, which numbers above seven thousand adherents. It was the hour

of divine service, numbers of these white female figures went closely veiled to their latticed gallery. I was not allowed to enter the body of the church, which is said to be very large and handsome, and to have some very fine carved work. I was offered a seat in the women's gallery; but I was fearful of disturbing them in their devotions, and after all of not being able to see anything behind the lattice; I therefore looked at the men in the vestibule, and had the greatest difficulty in the world to persuade myself that these people in caftans and turbans were christians. How foolish! thought I at length, half angry with myself, are a black coat and a christian identical? Such is the power of habit that it seems to deprive us of common sense!

At noon, we rode with the Consul through the vast gardens of Damascus to the village of Salayeh, which is inhabited only in the summer time. These gardens, or more properly speaking, orchards, abound in the most delicious apricot, which is the fruit of Damascus, as the pistaccio is of Aleppo, and the fig of Smyrna. A fine conserve is made of these apricots, which form an extensive branch of trade. This tree predominates in the immense plantations of noble fruit-trees which surround Damascus. Walnut, olive, pomegranate, and fig-trees compose an exquisite mosaic of foliage, which is rarely equalled in luxuriance and vigour. This boon of productive natural power is the only, but unquestionably the imperishable beauty of Damascus; and the oriental

who, languishing under his burning sun, can realize nothing more delightful than verdure, water and shade, cannot fail to regard Damascus as a Paradise.

The high clay walls of the gardens have, however, an unpleasing effect, and the destructive dust was very disagreeable, and often drew off our attention from surrounding objects to the appearance of our own party. And a strange party we must have looked ; methinks, not very unlike equestrian performers. The kavass was dressed in white, green and gold, and rode on horseback, holding in his hand his inseparable companion the long staff, the point of which he rested like a lance on his stirrup. His sombre Moor, and our Seïs were likewise on horseback, but the Seïs of the Consul rode on a milk white ass, decorated with many crimson tassels, Thus, like a gay shining snake, we wound our way through the narrow bazars, round the city and apricot groves. Adieu, my dear mother, the sun is set, and I am going to dine with the Consul. Farewell, till to-morrow.

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### LETTER XXIII.

TO MY MOTHER.

House of Assaad Pacha.—Arabian House and Harem.

Damascus, October 16, 1843.

WE had much difficulty in finding our way through the pitch dark bazars to the residence of the Consul. His lady, who received us courteously, was dressed

even more splendidly than yesterday, in pearls, emeralds and diamonds, with a magnificent scarlet shawl, and kabkabs a foot high. By the side of all this splendour I sank into obscure nothingness. She speaks only Arabic, of which I am ignorant, and our conversation is therefore confined to expressive gestures. The dinner was in some degree served, though not dressed in the European style. Mishmish—as the apricot is called in Arabic, was prepared in every possible variety, sweet and sour, warm and cold. This was obligingly done at my particular request, for I had heard so much of the mishmish of Damascus, which in its most simple form, that of a dried jelly, accompanies the poor pilgrim to Mecca, and the camel driver to Bagdad, and in its most perfect state, that of a conserve, is relished at the dessert of the wealthy, that I wished to become acquainted with it. Mishmish conserve is certainly very good; but the art of preserving fruit is much better understood at Nice. There were likewise pistaccios of Aleppo, and to the great satisfaction of my hostess, who is a native of Aleppo, I approved of the general custom of her country of eating the fruit with a little salt.

We dined in the quadrangle; not a breath of air was stirring, and the flame of the candles burnt as steadily as in a closed room. It was like a fine summer evening in Germany; very different from Beyrout, where the evenings are hotter than our warmest noon-day. The winter in Damascus is cold, the

snow not only falls, but sometimes remains on the ground for days together. At that season it must be awfully cold in those lofty, empty apartments, when their doorway and the whole quadrangle are filled with snow. Hence the palm is a stranger here, and the citron is found only in the very sheltered court yards of the houses. The winter is ushered in and terminates with rain. There is uninterrupted summer for six months together, with total absence of rain ; but the supply from the Barrada never fails.

The people are said to be in a state of agitation just now, because the season for levying troops is at hand ; there is generally a commotion on these occasions, when excesses are always committed, sometimes against the pacha, and sometimes against all persons excepting Mahometans, however innocent ; for excitement must always have an object upon which to expend itself. Under a government in whose hands the sceptre does not rest, but trembles, it can scarcely be otherwise than that the people will rise against an oppressive measure. If an insurrection should break out, the Consul intends to take his family to Beyrout, and to leave his house in the care of a Turkish friend, as it will be quite safe under the protection of a Mussulman.

This morning we went to see the house of Assaad Pacha, which is called after the name of its founder, and is inhabited by one of his descendants, a very wealthy Arab, with whom the Consul is well acquainted. On account of the Ramadan we could

not be admitted before noon, for the master of the house occupied the celebrated saloon as a sleeping apartment, till that time. Compared with this house, I must confess that all the others I have visited are as nothing—it looks like a palace among them. In the first place it has a grand entrance, a handsome vaulted gateway high enough to admit a man on horseback, and though the entrance is broken, as in the gates of our fortresses, and as in the Alhambra it is still a hall; whereas those in the other houses resemble a court.

With the exception of the fine gate, Assaad Pacha's house, like the Alhambra, has nothing remarkable in its external appearance; it is a large irregular building. As I have called the private residences fairy castles, I can find no superlative for this most beautiful of fairy palaces. I can only say that in magnificence of plan, tasteful execution and splendour of adornment, it is in comparison with them what a palace is to a cottage. Quadrangles, pavilions, alcoves and fountains, are unsymmetrically but most picturesquely combined, and the grand garden saloon which the master of the house quitted on our arrival, is the most charming that fancy can conceive. It occupies the whole of a detached building, which is surrounded by oleander, myrtle and jessamine. The interior is divided into a central apartment, and three raised alcoves, or Liwans, each of which is as large as a moderate sized drawing-room. The walls are faced with diagonal stripes of black, white and red

marble; the floor is covered with mosaic work of the rarest and most variegated marbles, forming elegant arabesque patterns. In the centre apartment rises a fountain, surrounded by truncated columns of black, white, and red marble. Each of these columns is hollow and throws up a jet of water which falls into the basin, so that it looks as if a crown of silver rays were formed over it. The ceiling is of dark wood, richly gilt in stripes interspersed with inlaid ornaments of mother o' pearl. Immediately below the ceiling is a row of small arched windows, the frames of which are of marble, and the glass painted in the most glowing colours, with verses from the Koran in Arabic characters, which look like talismanic signs. Wherever the eye turns, it rests on the most costly materials, and the most tasteful and elaborate execution.

The rarest of the rare is here blended together; splendour and elegance are combined, and I know not whether to exclaim, how magnificent! or how lovely! Broad divans run along the walls, a large handsome carpet, with another of smaller dimensions over it, were spread in one of the alcoves; on these lay a few cushions, which form the simple bed of the Orientals. It must be pleasant to rest here and indulge in waking dreams! The pavilion is ascended by several beautiful flights of marble steps, and the door and window frames are also of marble. Several other apartments were shewn us which were certainly as handsome as those in the residence of

the British Consul, but they could not be compared with those of the grand pavilion. I have at length seen something in Damascus which answers the expectations I had formed of its splendour, something that is not unworthy of the times of the Caliphs.

The Consul took us to see another Arabian house, which formed a striking contrast with that of Assaad Pacha. It was built a few years ago, by its present possessor, in the style of the houses of Constantinople; the walls were painted with frightful landscapes, and the ceilings bedaubed with flowers, in the barbarous taste of the palace of Tschirigan and the Kiosk of the Sweet Waters. When we were on the point of leaving it, a message was sent, requesting the gentlemen to retire, as the ladies wished to see me. They had scarcely withdrawn into the area, when I was surrounded by a crowd of females so excessively ugly, they really made me start! Truly the owner of this harem is not to be envied! The ladies and their female slaves were in the highest degree uncleanly and slovenly, nay quite disgusting; and looked as if, according to the prevailing custom here, they had slept in their clothes, and that not for one night only.

They were quite boisterous, laughed, and screamed aloud, stared at me, and seized my hands; the savages in the South Sea Islands could not be more rude or turbulent in the expressions of their curiosity. And this was the harem of a rich and distinguished man! Truly the effects of living in a harem are un-



feminising and debasing in the extreme. What a melancholy contrast between the behaviour of these women and that of the Jewish ladies, who like them are born in Syria, and are equally destitute of the advantages of education. In one point there is an essential difference: the free intercourse of the other sex, which gives a taste and refinement, to which the inmates of a harem must be strangers. I felt exceedingly uncomfortable amongst these uncivilised beings, and was heartily glad when I rejoined my companions. The sight of such coarse women was revolting to my feelings. I had rather see a drove of oxen or sheep, for the harem degrades women to the level of the brute creation.

Do not be offended at this strong expression, my dear mother! I could not see them and I cannot think of them without indignation. Men who take the liberty of writing about things which they do not understand, have too often asserted that the Oriental females are not unhappy in their harems. So much the worse for them! Is a cow unhappy in a verdant meadow? The harem is a meadow which amply supplies the requirements of animal life. Enough! I cannot think of it; my heart sickens at the thought. Happy for me that I belong to the ancient Northern barbarians—to the nations of the Teutonic race, among whom, even in the most remote times, woman had the place which Providence assigned her. Polygamy is a wall of separation between the Oriental nations and Christendom.

You are doubtless dissatisfied with my description of Damascus, and I am sorry for it; but the much lauded and extolled city of the Caliphs has not inspired me with enthusiasm. Moorish Spain has spoiled me! Those who do not, like me, travel as fancy prompts them, but on a systematic plan, should first visit Syria and then Spain, thus following the Moors in the development of their history. To-morrow we start for Beyrout, which we hope to reach in three days. How much I have had to endure in this depôt of dust from insects and vermin is inexpressible, and in truth quite insupportable! Farewell, dearest mother!

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## LETTER XXIV.

TO MY SISTER.

Return from Damascus—The Mukeri—A rest day.

Beyrout, October 21, 1843.

“*De las cosas mas seguras, la mas segura es dudar!*” This admirable Spanish proverb is applicable here in the fullest sense of the words. Here, my dear Clara, people are always in doubt, whether they shall do this or that, whether such a thing shall be accomplished or not; whether such a person, who is to give his services for a good sum of money will be pleased to move his little finger at the right moment or not, all is most uncertain. The value of

time is unknown here. To-day? Why to-day? Why not to-morrow? Why not next year? A most provoking indolence prevails, which might perhaps be understood, if this indifference also extended to money making; but here it stops. Money is coveted above everything; not in the way of industry but of extortion, for all seek to exert themselves as little as they can. Eulenspiegel's axiom comes to my mind here: "Give me thine"—money—"and I will retain mine"—service.

I hope I shall be a genuine philosopher by the time I return to Europe; by genuine, I mean practical; of speculative philosophy I think nothing. I hope to become patient, long suffering and gentle, in this practical school, virtues of which I stand greatly in need, as you are well aware. In Germany I travel with my watch in my hand; and if I go by railway from Dresden to Leipzig, and am five minutes beyond the appointed time, I exclaim, "Alas! alas! there is no great gain of time in travelling by railway!" If there is a delay of half a minute in changing horses, I cry out pettishly, "What a badly managed inn!" Duly to appreciate railways and post-horses, they must be viewed from hence, and Anti-Libanus is the very point of view.

It was not till about eight o'clock on the 17th that we took our departure from the Casa Nova at Damascus, for as the horses and men were lodged in various quarters, it was not possible to collect them all at their post at six o'clock, as had been arranged.

They did not arrive till seven, and then packed the luggage so hurriedly, that, as we passed through the narrow bazars, it was often on the point of falling off, and of being dashed to pieces by coming into collision with a slope. Among other bazars we were compelled to pass through that of the butchers, a most disgusting place. There the sheep, for the supply of the whole of Damascus, are slaughtered, skinned and quartered, and our horses had to walk through the running channels of blood, and over the still palpitating animals. I was truly glad, when after riding three quarters of an hour, we reached the city gate; but here we were obliged to halt and to repack all our luggage.

Where the gardens of Damascus terminate, vegetation disappears; and after leaving them we proceeded along stony and steep roads into the bare calcareous mountains. Here the oasis-like character of the city is very striking. We rode till half-past two o'clock, through the rocky waste of Anti-Libanus, without passing through a village or even meeting with a single brook. At length we came in sight of both, and the Mukeri desired to halt for the night. Mukeri is properly speaking the designation of the mule drivers; but the name is applied indifferently to the whole class of men, whether they have the charge of horses or mules; we, however, decided on proceeding, as it would have been unwise to encamp so early in the afternoon, especially at a dirty village.

The men obeyed indeed, but kept up such an in-

cessant quarrel—screaming, bellowing, raging and fighting, till they were quite hoarse and exhausted; an Arabian quarrel in short, of which it is not possible to form any idea, even in Naples itself. They studiously delayed the journey, sometimes to water the horses, sometimes to arrange the luggage, sometimes to make alterations which were not in the least required; Giorgio, whose disposition is not very lamb-like, at last lost his patience to such a degree that he struck the Seis with a switch, upon which the latter, by way of revenge, overturned the baggage of one of the horses into the water through which we were unfortunately passing at the moment.

We were now of course compelled to halt as the things had to be taken out of the water and dried; and, at half past three we struck our tent in the desolate, rocky defile, amidst an uproar and tumult that baffle all description. I now thought it time to interfere, and assuming all due dignity: said very majestically: “*Mafisch Bakschisch*” that is, “there is no drink-money.” Properly speaking I ought to have said no “drink-money will be given,”—but my knowledge of Arabic did not yet extend to conjugation. In the tumult of the moment—my words seemed to fall unheeded upon the ear; but on the following morning the Mukeri came to my tent, and laying their hands upon their breast said very humbly. “*Buon giorno, Signora,*” this was by way of apology, and to assure me of their submission. I sent them word through Giorgio that it was my

intention to pass the night at khan Murad, and to reach Beyrout on the following day, and that they must prepare accordingly. With this they were satisfied, and thus peace was re-established.

It is scarcely possible to conceive how intensely cold it was in Anti-Libanus on the 18th of October before sunrise. My fingers were so benumbed that I endeavoured to warm them on the neck of my horse, while the poor animal stood shivering, with his tail between his legs. As soon as the sun rose above the mountains it was more tolerable, and at noon even warm; but it was never hot. We journeyed from half past six till a quarter before one, in order to reach the khan El Merdshi in the Bekaa; but again, throughout the whole of our ride we did not see either a village, or khan, or even a drop of water! There is something inexpressibly inhospitable in the whole region of Anti-Libanus. We met several trains of mules, perhaps, as many as forty or fifty animals one behind the other, laden with bales of merchandise, on their way to Damascus. Later in the season, when hurricanes and sudden thunder-storms are frequent, travelling along the road is impracticable, because for a distance of seven or eight leagues neither shelter nor lodging can be obtained.

On the last offset of Anti-Libanus we saw a ruin, which may have been a castle of the Druses, or what is more probable, an ancient fortress of the Crusaders; opposite to it, on Mount Lebanon, lies ano-

ther ruin, which, at a distance appeared in a tolerable state of preservation. Both are visible at the same time, on entering the Bekaa, to the north of which rises Zachle embosomed in groves of poplar. The khan El Merdshi is situated upon the Leontes, close to a bridge which is thrown across the river. This river might probably be waded with safety at other places, but as the banks are swampy, travellers always pass over the bridge; hence numerous customers resort to this khan, which comparatively speaking has such superior accommodations, that I was able to obtain curds and whey ! A large caravan of camels rested here at noon, and I looked with much interest at these animals, which will probably ere long convey me to Egypt. Their appearance is by no means attractive, and the gurgling noise which they make in drinking is really frightful.

After halting half an hour, we left the khan, and began to ascend Lebanon ; the path is very rough, and though we might not be in danger of breaking our necks, we certainly ran no little risk of breaking our legs. Our poor horses, which are never groomed, and miserably fed at night upon a pittance of chopped straw with a little barley, seemed scarcely able to cope with the journey. I was very glad to find something like a stable for them at the khan Murad, which we reached in three hours, for a cutting wind was whistling over the mountain. We were obliged to pitch our tent upon the flat roof of the khan, the only level spot that we could find, and

to secure it by twisting the cords round heavy stones, which supplied the place of the tent pegs.

We were encamped in a very airy situation it is true, yet far better lodged than a party of Englishmen who arrived after us; for as they had no tent, they were obliged to take up their quarters in the khan itself, among the men and animals. We watched them as they rode off the following morning, when they looked as neat as if they had passed the night in the best hotel. They seemed very contented and independent, and each of them took his knapsack and his little wadded coverlet and laid it upon his horse. They were naval officers, and therefore accustomed by their profession to hardships of every kind; we could not help contrasting them with the four Frenchmen who left Beyrout at the same time as we did, and who made more fuss, and required more indulgences than the most fastidious lady.

Men ought to be able to endure privations and fatigue, or they are not worthy of the name of men; the case is different with respect to ladies, and we do not expect it from them, though, as regards myself, I do not apply the rule so strictly, for I must be able to restrain or to indulge myself as the case may be, and this discipline is wholesome both for mind and body; but not every lady is equal to it.

Both yesterday and to-day I experienced an uncomfortable feeling from the sudden transitions of the temperature; the change of the atmosphere



from seven in the morning, till four in the afternoon, during our journey from khan Murad to Beyrout, was as great as from the cold of autumn to the heat of summer. At the highest point on the pass over Libanus we again came in sight of the beautiful ocean; but we had to descend four thousand feet ere we reached it. The different zones, through which we passed, were clearly indicated by the vegetation. On the brow of Libanus the cultivation commences with vineyards and a few vegetables; a little lower fig-trees appear, small and stunted, but gradually increase in size; then we descended to the region of the olive, and at length through palm groves, and fragrant hedges of acacia, came into the verdant gardens of Beyrout, which appeared quite refreshed by the copious rains, which had fallen for three days during our absence.

A welcome surprise awaited me at Baptista's hotel. When the Druse Francesco shewed me into the apartment which I had previously occupied, I did not recognise it; so much had it been improved. All the cobwebs had disappeared; the walls and the ceiling had been newly white-washed, and the curtains of the six windows, and of the bed were as white as the driven snow. In short, it was bright and pure as the chalice of a lily. I am quite charmed with it—especially as the Casa Nova was by no means clean.

Yesterday was a day of rest; we intended to set out early this morning by way of Tyre and

Sidon, for Carmel, and accordingly took leave of the Consul-general and his lady, till we should meet again in Germany. Indeed it is not improbable that we may meet again here, for according to the latest accounts, the disturbances in the region of Samaria are so great, that there is some difficulty in travelling to Jerusalem by the direct road ; and as for passing through the wilderness, nobody but myself would dream of it. There it is safe to day and unsafe to-morrow, just as the Bedouins may happen to be disposed. I am, however, inclined to prefer the most inconvenient expedition by land to one by sea, for as the steamers have ceased to ply, the only alternative is to go by a sailing vessel, which I have not the patience to submit to. To lie becalmed four or five days at the entrance of a roadstead, or to be driven by a storm, some hundred miles out of your course, all which and much worse may happen on board a sailing vessel, would be more than my newly acquired Eastern patience could endure. I shall follow the plan which we adopted in Spain, where we were pretty much in the same case as here ; namely, go as far as we can, and turn back when we can proceed no further.

This morning, when I was already equipped for the journey, Giorgio arrived with the intelligence that he had not succeeded yesterday in concluding a bargain with the owner of the horses, and that he now demanded quite an exorbitant sum. As

I clearly foresaw that the dispute would occupy the best part of the morning, I at once gave up the idea of setting off to-day, that I might not be annoyed by being put off from hour to hour. Now was I not right, in saying in the beginning of my letter 'of all certain things the most certain is to doubt.' The Mahometan never says: to-morrow I will do such or such a thing, without adding "Inshallah," "if God will." It is a precept of the Koran, and is founded on the circumstance that Mahomet being questioned concerning the history of the seven sleepers, replied that he would communicate the matter to-morrow; but did not receive a revelation respecting it till a later period. "Mashallah," that is, "what God will," is likewise a common expression among them; but the most general is Ya Allah! pronounced Yallah—this is "Oh God!" With this one word, Yallah, a little conversation may be kept up; for it is an exclamation either of joy or sorrow, expresses astonishment, surprise, or anger and means forwards, go on—good, good—just so—for all I care, &c. Indeed it is as multi-significant a Proteus word as the Spanish Vaya, vaya, and is used just as frequently.

The Arabian singing likewise reminds me of the Spanish: like it, it falls inharmoniously upon the ear. Our mule-drivers, when in a good humour, sung all day long, or I should rather say they uttered, with all the power of their lungs, wild, discordant tones, which sounded more like wrangling than

singing, and when they passed from the one to the other, the difference was really not very perceptible.

The abstinence of these people put me quite to the blush. I thought myself extremely moderate on this journey, yet I had everything that I wanted in abundance and of the best quality, though not in much variety. The mukeri, who had daily to travel eight or nine hours on foot along the most fatiguing roads, subsisted on a piece of bread not larger than my hand; and if we passed a vineyard or a field of maize, they would take a bunch of grapes or an ear of the corn. This was all the solid food of which they partook: if there are nutritious qualities in water, it is conceivable that they need but little substantial nourishment; for they passed neither stream, well, or puddle without taking a draught. If water is not nourishing, they must have the capacity of a camel, which drinks by anticipation. With an empty stomach, they wrapt themselves up at night in their miserably thin cloaks, which are so scanty that they did not cover their naked, shivering legs, and slept so soundly on the stony ground, under the beautiful, but ice-cold firmament of Heaven, that Giorgio had to awake them every morning. Their teeth actually chattered with the cold while they packed the horses; but as soon as the sun appeared, they sang till the mountains re-echoed. Sometimes one or the other would run on some distance before, in order to rest till we

came up to him, which he effected by crouching down upon his heels in the Arab fashion. This mode of sitting appears to be far more inconvenient than that adopted by the Turks, who sit cross-legged.

The evening we were at the khan Murad, I stared full of astonishment at our Seïs for his twofold dexterity : he squatted upon his heels, and, in this position, wrote upon his left hand, with pen and ink, the reckoning which he was to give to his master at Beyrout. This facility in writing of an Arabian Seïs really astonished me ; in Germany when a young man has attained this proficiency, he forthwith turns author ; but here he is contented to remain a mule driver. This evidence of good sense gives a favourable opinion of the Arabs. They are, however, said not to manifest it on all occasions, for they are extremely vain, and consider themselves infinitely superior to Europeans. As they fancy that they can learn nothing from a European, they of course do not learn anything, though their talents would very well qualify them for doing so with great facility. It is therefore infinitely difficult to live among them, and to employ mechanics, or servants who pretend to understand everything better than yourself ; who do not like to use the slightest exertion, and yet eagerly seek to profit by the European in every possible way. Of course I cannot say this from personal experience, but such I am assured is the fact. Hence, till habit, which gradually smooths every difficulty, has in-

tervened, domestic life presents a series of grievances to a European who has to contend with inconveniences of which we can form no idea at home.

Mrs. von Wildenbruch, who possesses the happy tact of overcoming obstacles with amiable resolution, and at the same time is quite impartial in her opinion of the country and the people, has told me of many things which must incredibly increase the burdens of everyday life. I was surprised to learn that she is even obliged to send to Malta, for shoes for her little girl, as the nearest mart where anything tolerable is to be had. Yet, compared with Damascus, Beyrout appears highly civilised. The resident consuls have gathered a small circle of Europeans around them, and the regular arrival of the steamers once a fortnight with letters and newspapers, keeps up an interest in public affairs, which is further promoted by the influx of passengers of merchantmen and other vessels, especially French and English, who bring intelligence from every part of the world. There are two tolerable inns where travellers may find accommodation, and can be supplied, by the European merchants with many articles which they may require on their journey. But in the event of a lengthened visit, and especially of a permanent residence, Beyrout, with all these advantages, does not meet the social claims of European society. This strikes me very forcibly on a second visit, and I can feel for those who are expatriated here.

Beyrout is very advantageously situated, and enjoys

a salubrious climate. Its roadstead too is the best on the Syrian coast ; but they are all bad, with the exception of that at Alexandretta, where, however, the climate is so very unhealthy, that a few days suffice to lay up a whole ship's crew with pestilential fever. Beyrout is as ancient—at least historically—as its celebrated neighbours Tyre and Sidon, for it is mentioned in Scripture by the name of Berytus ; but one would never infer this from its present appearance, for it looks exactly like a fortress of the middle ages. The houses have the appearance of little towers or castles, where the Crusaders or Saracens defended themselves from the assaults of their enemies, and yet enjoyed light and air within. At whatever period the present town of Beyrout may have been built it must have been in unsafe times, though the construction of the houses plainly testify that there was much individual freedom and liberty within the walls.

We took a walk through the town and afterwards went to the camp, which is permanently fixed before the gate in front of the pacha's residence, and serves as barracks for the Arnaut soldiers, who are now here. The Palikari are remarkable for the symmetry and beauty of their figures. Their costume, consisting of ample white fustionella, and jacket embroidered with gold, and a broad girdle, in which they wear the yatagan and pistols is rather theatrical ; but they put it on most knowingly and with perfect consciousness of their personal beauty. One of them

actually placed himself right before us, and slowly and gracefully turned round on his axis.

But if such a handsome young barbarian may not be a little vain of his beauty, whither in the world may poor vanity repair with a good conscience ; here it seemed to me to be quite in its right place. Whence these men have this dignified deportment, that elastic step, that graceful motion of the arms, is inexplicable, if we deny the distinct characters of the different races of men. This I am far from doing. I believe that nature has the right to endow her creation at pleasure, and to enrich whole nations, as well as individuals more lavishly than others. In a savage or half savage state, the stamp of race is transmitted through thousands of years, and the descendants of the victors in the Olympian games, have inherited naught from their fathers, but their form. Under the hand of civilisation the stamp of race is the most speedily effaced, but happily not altogether ! Something of the peculiar endowment, whether personal or mental, remains, and testifies that man is not entirely an artificial product of culture. And now, my dearest Clara, I must bid you farewell. Carmel is our next point ; but as it is nearly four days' journey from Beyrout, I cannot say from what place my next letter is likely to be dated. Perhaps I may find time to write to you by the way.



## LETTER XXV.

TO MY SISTER.

Sidon (Saïda) Emir Beschir—Lady Hester Stanhope—Tyre (Tur)—Oriental Travelling—St. Jean d'Acre (Acca)—The Little Bairam—Mount Carmel.

Monastery on Mount Carmel, October 25th, 1843.

I found it impossible, my dearest Clara, to write to you on my route hither, as I had hoped. After travelling a whole day on horseback under a scorching sun, I was really glad to lie down upon my mattress at night. I did not want for leisure, as our daily journeys were short; but I felt quite indisposed to take up the pen. I know not how it is, but this journey has fatigued me more than that to Damascus, which was considerably longer. Perhaps my present horse has not such an easy pace, or it may be owing to the excessive heat, which does not abate, even during the night. I am in a constant state of perspiration, and, as I never suffer from it in our bracing atmosphere at home, it makes me feel quite faint. Here, however, on the top of a promontory, six hundred feet above the level of the sea, the temperature is perfection, and I am already beginning to revive. The air is quite different to that of the burning sands of the coast, or the parched, extensive heaths over which we passed, and without assuming the bleakness of our northern

latitude, it refreshes the blood and invigorates the nerves.

We arrived at the convent at half-past ten this morning; and although there is but little to be seen here—so little, indeed, that our dragoman proposed that we should merely breakfast here and resume our journey—we have decided on remaining till to-morrow. Throughout the whole course of my journey I have not met with another spot where I felt so truly happy, and could say, with such real satisfaction, here I will stop a day.

I know not whether it is the wondrous, majestic beauty of nature, the quiet, consolatory peace of the convent, the thought of standing at the threshold of the Holy Land, or thankfulness for having proceeded thus far on my pilgrimage in safety; but, in short, it is more exquisite upon Carmel than upon the Bosphorus, on the summit of Libanus or amid the ruins of Baalbec; not more delightful to look upon, but to be there. Here I would erect my tabernacle, if the world were to me an empty void. Here I could enter into that feeling which constrained Lady Hester Stanhope to expatriate herself, never more to return to her native land. My predilection for a convent life has revived, and I cannot help saying: "Happy is he who is permitted even to pass through this place; but happier he who may dwell here."

The monks have not the appearance of devotees, but are plain, straightforward men, who, agreeably

to their calling, discharge their duties, without turning to the right hand or to the left. One of them is a German, a Bavarian from the neighbourhood of Afschaffenburg, who lived a considerable time in the Carmelite convent of the Penitents at Wurtzburg—which perhaps you will recollect we visited together—whence he was sent to Bagdad, and ultimately to this place. I must, however, candidly confess that I am not much smitten with our countryman, who looks as if he cherished the remembrance of the Bavarian beer of his youth.

This convent is the only one in Palestine which does not belong to the Franciscans, or to the fraternity of the Terra Santa, because a very ancient tradition has constituted Mount Carmel the cradle of the order of the Carmelites. In other parts of Syria, in Libanus, Bagdad, and even in remote parts of India, the Carmelites have convents, partly for the spiritual charge of the resident or travelling Roman Catholics, lodging and accommodation of strangers, and partly for the training of missionaries. I asked the Padre Guardiano whether the conversion of the Hindoos was really making progress. He was honest enough to reply, very little; but added, that the missionary stations were a great benefit to the young children, who, according to the custom of the country, are exposed in great numbers, and who would otherwise inevitably perish. When a missionary finds one of these poor half dead little wretches, then,—you will expect

me to add, he takes it up, carries it home, nourishes and educates it? No such thing! He baptizes it, by which, continued he, "the child obtains the privilege of enjoying eternal bliss with Christ in Paradise!"

I gazed at him with unfeigned astonishment; but he spoke as he felt, and really believed that the child thus obtained this unspeakable privilege! To imagine that God would assign to the undeveloped soul of a baptised infant a better place than to that of a poor babe which is not baptised, one need, indeed, become the inmate of a convent, who, by the strict observance of outward ceremonies has insensibly become accustomed to esteem the outward form above the inward work. This kind-hearted but blinded man had this dogma of his church so much at heart, that it was his earnest desire to go to India. But in the selection of persons for missions of that nature, the general of the order does not so much take into consideration personal inclination, as individual suitability for the office.

At breakfast I was introduced to the other monks, who afterwards conducted me over such parts of the convent as the rules permitted. The church is a fine building in the form of a Greek cross, lighted from above by a cupola; but the pictures are hideous, and the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary of Carmel, placed over the high altar, is an ugly, dressed out, wooden doll. I am now sitting in my room, at the large strongly barred window

which affords a boundless view of the magnificent sea, along whose coasts I have travelled all the way from Beyrout. I was told that I should find this journey tedious, but I certainly did not, although there are no peculiar attractions by the way.

The road from Beyrout to Acre is performed in three short days' journey, during the whole of which we travelled across a plain with the Mediterranean on our right and the heights of Libanus on our left. These mountains sometimes recede into the distance, leaving a large open tract of land, and then again run so close to the shore that they touch the waves and form promontories on which the road is continued by a steep ascent.

The heights of Libanus decline so gradually that they sink to the level of hills in the vicinity of Acre, where the range terminates. The extensive plains of Acre, through which several rivers flow into the sea, separates Libanus from Carmel. It was the ancient boundary of Canaan, or the promised land, which was situated between Libanus in the north, the Great Sea in the west, the Arabian Desert in the south, and the river Jordan and the Dead Sea in the east. It was called "the Promised Land" by the Israelites, because it had been promised and, in part, given by Jehovah to the descendants of Abraham; and by Christians "the Holy Land" because our Lord lived and suffered here. But it has almost lost both these designations, as well as that of Palestine, and is now comprehended, with the adjacent

countries in the north and east, under the general name of Syria. My thoughts are already in Palestine, and I have some difficulty in bringing them back to Beyrout, which we left on the 22nd of October at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Our road at first lay through plantations of mulberry and groves of pines, then across a tract of deep sand which the sea has deposited along the road. After riding a couple of hours, we bade adieu to sand and plantations, but the soil retained its productive character, and evidently needs only cultivation to render it one of the most fertile; for if we except the stony promontories and some sandy tracts, there is no want of water anywhere. We were often obliged to ride through tiny brooks which in the rainy season are swelled to streams, and are not only difficult to pass, but often obstruct the road. They meandered between lofty oleander bushes, profusely covered with bright red flowers, which had a splendid effect under the deep blue of the firmament above us.

The road over the promontories was rugged and steep, otherwise very convenient. Now and then we saw a ship cleaving the calm blue sea, and on the high projecting rocks of Libanus are scattered villages and Christian monasteries, and forts of the Druses. Emir Beschir the last prince of the Druses, and his twelve sons resided at Deir el Kamar, in this neighbourhood. He was an ambitious, artful man, who grounded his claim to the sovereignty on

the ancient conquest of Libanus by the Druses, and considered all the inhabitants as his subjects. Whatever character man assumes, if he can support it by suitable means, his claim to it is acknowledged, and the means employed by Emir Beschir was to be on good terms with the adherents of the three hostile religions: the Maronites, the Mahometans and the Druses, who reside in these districts among or near each other. In order to gain the first he is said to have become a Christian, to have built a church, and to have attended divine worship with them; for the followers of Islamism he built a mosque where he participated in their religious exercises; and lastly he was successful in ingratiating himself with the Druses, who called him their great emir, the prince of all Libanus.

In 1832 when Ibrahim Pacha conquered Syria and governed it as representative of his father Mehemet Ali, Emir Beschir submitted to him, but he fell with the Egyptian sway in Syria, in 1840, when the European powers thought it time to expel the powerful vassal of the powerless Porte from that country. It is said that Emir Beschir was just on the point of deserting Ibrahim Pacha, and taking part with the Porte, when he was sent to Malta, whence this octogenarian prince was removed to Constantinople, where he now lives. His sons were all scattered, and his palace is lying in ruins, like that of Lady Hester Stanhope, which is also situated in the mountain above Saïda.

An eccentric character such as hers, is rarely endowed with that decided, clear perception of its object which will prevent its diverging into extravagance. The total seclusion to which she retired, after the death of her uncle William Pitt,—when England and intercourse with the English became intolerable to her—presented the most favourable soil for her eccentricities. She expected a Mahometan Messiah, and many were the extravagances in which she indulged upon this point. Strange tales are related of her vagaries: on one occasion she ordered the punishment of the bastinado to be inflicted upon a courier, who was the bearer of letters, because she did not wish to receive any; and on another, being dissatisfied with her agent, she caused the half of his beard to be shaved off, and desired him to go thus disfigured, to Damascus. I could fill sheets with similar anecdotes.

At half-past five o'clock we arrived at Saïda, the Sidon of Scripture, no longer celebrated as in the time of the Phœnicians for its purple dye, but for its bananas, which flourish in great profusion. The Arabs are so fond of the banana that they believe this to have been the fruit which tempted Eve in Paradise, and they even fancy that they can trace the figure of the serpent's head in the form of the blossom. We halted at the city gate and pitched our tents on the solid sand of the shore, between



the Mediterranean and large gardens abounding in olive trees enclosed with tamarisks.

The evening was beautiful, and it was charming to fall asleep by the sound of the glorious cradle song with which the murmuring waves lulled the earth to rest. However peaceful it may have been during the day, the waves always dash higher and higher after sunset, in spite of the most profound calm, while at night they lash the shore and roar like the voices of the spirits of the storm. I could wish always to sleep by the sea coast. If I happen to be awake during the night, I do not hear these dismal ghost-like moanings and creakings, of I know not what beings, currents of air or other unknown causes, which have confirmed the belief in ghosts and goblins, and which in the silence of night are heard at times in every house. I have no belief whatever in ghosts; but, whenever I hear that creaking, sliding and tapping, my hairs stand on end, as the ghost stories have it; but this feeling is never awakened by the peaceful sound of the waves. In listening to their gentle lulling it is impossible to think of ghosts, but only of the great, the good and mighty spirit who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand.

Whilst we were preparing for our journey at sunrise, all was life and activity around us; the women with their pitchers upon their left shoulders came tripping from the town to draw water, from a remarkably fine well close to us; and many children

were running about, inquisitively regarding all our movements. On one side men were slaughtering sheep, and on the other many hands were employed in making pretty lace of yellow silk and cotton. Thus engaged in ordinary trade and manual labour proud Sidon, once the queen among the cities, now appears. Its situation is beautiful; like Beyrout, Tyre, and Acre, Sidon stands upon a rising ground which overhangs the sea, and a bridge leads to the ancient fortress, which is built upon a ledge of rocks.

We rode between the town and its gardens, having passed which we came to a scorched heathy tract, which, however, when it is cultivated after the autumnal rains, is extremely productive. To my great regret our whole day's journey was of the same character, and lay at some distance from the sea. We crossed many streams, the banks of which were covered with oleander in full bloom. Over one of them a decayed bridge formed a picturesque ruin amid the gay cheerful thickets. This river was probably the Leontes, which rises in the plain of Baalbec, near the ruins of the temple of the Sun. It empties itself into the sea in the vicinity of Tur, the ancient Tyre. "What city is like Tyrus?" exclaims the Prophet, "like the destroyed in the midst of the sea."

We passed by the silent city, which looked desolate and melancholy, and destitute of the verdant environs which usually surround the towns of Syria.

I am ashamed to confess that a gazelle captivated me so much, that my attention was so riveted by this singularly beautiful animal, that Tyre received only a transient glance. The only excuse I can offer is, that it was the first time I had ever seen a wild gazelle. Fleet as the wind she bounded forwards, sometimes stooping, then springing up, now capering with short leaps, and again darting forwards with the swiftness of an arrow;—most delicate in her figure, and graceful in her movements. The Oriental poet borrows from the gazelle a thousand graces to describe the beauties of his mistress. The large, soft eye, the fairy tread, the delicate foot, and inimitable grace, I have found more than realised in the gazelle;—but certainly looked for them in vain among the Arab women.

We rode for an hour and a half beyond Tyre, and stopped at a village, the chief buildings of which were a large khan, and a water-mill, turned by a beautiful limpid stream—a sight not often met with here. Perhaps it was from the bed of this stream that the sand was taken for the manufacture of the glass for which the Phœnicians were so celebrated. Foreign nations imagined that none but the sand from a river in the vicinity of Tyre could be employed for this purpose, till they discovered that any sand might be used.

Stories of robbers and thieves now thickened upon us wherever we passed the night, and whenever our

people entered into conversation with the inhabitants, we heard of nothing but the insecurity of the road ; a journey to Nazareth was considered hazardous, and to Jerusalem impossible. Bedouins, it was reported, infested the country as far as Acre. A poor Arab, who possessed nothing in the world but his tobacco pipe and white woollen cloak, in which he enveloped himself in a most picturesque style, wanted to go by way of Nazareth and was heartily glad to join our caravan, but trembled at the thought of what might happen to him after he should quit us. Thus it seems that the poorest wretches are not secure from being plundered. The delectable history of an Englishman which I heard in Beyrout, but there looked upon as an invention, here assumed a degree of probability.

The story was this : this unfortunate traveller had joined a caravan at Jerusalem, but had incautiously remained behind. He fell among robbers who so completely stripped him of all, that he was in some little difficulty how to return to Jerusalem, as the only article of dress which the Bedouins had left him was his hat, of which they could make no use. In this deplorable state, and with his hat upon his head, he set out on his return like a monarch of a savage tribe.

I am, however, under no apprehension that a similar catastrophe will befall us, for while travelling in Italy, Spain, and Palermo, the same chimes

were rung; banditti were said to lurk in every turning of the road, and yet I never lost the value of a pin. Even now that the accounts of robbers become more and more alarming I do not lose my courage; but it was really amusing to look at our poor Seïs, the rich man, as I call him, who was half crazy with despair. He is the owner of the four mules which carry our dragoman and baggage, and the fifth which he himself rides, with an enormous pipe in his hand, and a turban on his head as large as a bomb. His man rides upon an ass; and as all this treasure is now exposed to the greatest danger he is in a terrible fright. At other times he assumes the dignified bearing of a rich man, especially in the evening when he deals out to his servants the rations for the mules; but whenever stories of robbers are related, which at present seems to be the favourite topic among the people, he completely loses his self-possession, and anxiously consults with the dragoman respecting means of defence.

You must bear in mind that all of us, masters, servants, mukeri, horses and mules are living in the closest proximity imaginable; by day riding side by side, or behind each other, and during the night crowded in a small space, so that I had both time and opportunity to study the *faits et gestes* of our rich man, whose timidity amuses us excessively.

The scene in the neighbourhood of our water-

mill was very pretty : several travellers mounted on fine horses with gay saddles arrived soon after us, and reposed on carpets near the khan, and I observed that their negro slaves led the horses about a considerable time before they took them to watering. Some poor pedestrians likewise stopped here, squatted contentedly upon their heels, and chatted away incessantly, very patiently awaiting the sunset before they refreshed themselves with a pipe and a piece of bread. Our tents formed the third group, and conversation passed from the one to the other, for the Arab is a sociable and talkative being. Even on the road, they always call to each other from a great distance, and converse as long as they can hear each other's voices, and how much more when congregated together at an inn ! I must confess that it is excessively amusing to be at a khan, where you can see every description of people, free from constraint, each following their own peculiar customs. This we should never attain at home, even if we were to pass our whole life at an inn. Not that there is a lack of travellers at our inns ; quite the contrary, but we see them only when they are formally seated in due order at their meals ; and no sooner is the cloth removed, than each returns, hermit-like, to his own apartment. By the refinements of education and the usages of society, we lose the habit of associating with the world in general ; and, in spite of our endeavours to keep aloof in order to avoid un-

pleasant collision, we in fact do not attain our desired object—that of maintaining a certain dignified deportment among plebeian life. Here it is otherwise, for travelling in this country is on a larger and more liberal scale, than being transported by steam from one place to another.

Lately I pronounced a panegyric upon railways; now I must do the contrary. Thus it must always be, according as we give prominence to the advantage or disadvantage of any arrangements. As railways are entirely conformable to the spirit of the age, calculated for the progress of industry and utility, punctuality and saving of time, the soul of business is connected with them; and there are moments when one values these above anything else. But when one thoroughly feels the enjoyment of passing through the world in conscious independence, and in profound, unrestricted sympathy with surrounding objects, relying only upon one's self,—which feeling is most predominant in my nature,—then the railway becomes an abomination: hence my enjoyment of travelling in Europe is gone.

Picture to yourself the difference in true and lively colours, between being hurried one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles in a day, in an isolated, shut-up, heavy carriage, amid a constant din, unable to hear, or see, or think, and finding yourself towards evening duly delivered at an inn, and that of riding on a good horse in the refreshing air, under the clear sky. Perhaps you may not accomplish above

twenty or twenty-five miles in a day ; but you are at liberty to halt by the side of some inviting stream and enjoy your breakfast, or you may stop and pluck a sprig of oleander to ornament your bonnet, or pause to watch the singular motions of a sea-spider ; nay, you may eat, drink, rest, or proceed, according to pleasure ; in short, you are at liberty to do as you list. You are free : and here lies the magic.

The railways cramp my power of will, inasmuch as they depress my imagination. It may be for my good ; but I do not like to be controlled, even for good, on this point. It is, in fact, too bad, that every individual in Europe is now placed under a rigorous guardianship, on the pretext that the mass is thereby formed for the enjoyment of liberty. I do not believe that the mass gains what the individual loses : for in important moments where you are called upon to show who you are, and what you can do, the individual must always step out of the line, and place himself at the head, and the multitude, which without him can neither decide nor act, implicitly follows him.

But in Europe people are easily persuaded. The railway forwards a man, with five hundred others, in three days, from Berlin to Dresden and back, so that he has just had time to visit—besides the railway stations—the Bruhl-terrace, the picture-gallery, and the opera, and all at once, he is convinced that he has a mighty share in the freedom of the age. But it is the peculiarity of this nerveless



age to make nothing of freedom but an abstract idea, which dissolves in a phrase. The East is the land of the individual : here he must either care for himself, or attach himself to one who can care both for himself and for another.

Our party has just been joined by several travellers who will go under our protection, so that in the event of an attack from the dreaded robbers, we shall be all the stronger. This is the beginning of the feudal system, and thus I am living, as it were, in the middle ages. The pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre, lodging in a convent, the insecurity of the road, the arrangement of our caravan, the junction of poor pilgrims, nothing is wanting to complete the illusion. You will hardly guess how I was awakened yesterday morning : by the cries of a flock of cranes who were passing over our heads. How often when I heard these tones, late in the autumn, and saw these birds journeying in their phalanx through the sky, have I longed to wander with them to southern climes. Now I was in their winter quarters, and my thoughts wandered back to the northern land which they and I had so lately quitted. How delightful is it, that thought travels swifter than the crane can fly from one quarter of the globe to another !

While the shepherds were leading their flocks from the village into the open wilderness, and the sun threw his glorious mantle over the dark, high ridges of Libanus, we broke up our encampment

about seven o'clock. We had to cross Cap blanc, the highest promontory along this coast. The road is partly artificial, that is to say, the masses of stone rock have been removed out of the steep path which runs over it, in a zig-zag direction; but this can scarcely be called an improvement, for the horses have no firm footing upon the bare, calcareous rock, and often slipped, especially in descending. When once we had crossed the hill the road was again very good, and we proceeded without interruption through the plain.

Here several picturesque objects presented themselves, such as a village shaded by palm-trees, on a rising hill near the sea; on another adjoining Libanus stood two immense pillars; further on, large groves of orange-trees, which appeared to be without a master and running wild; among them were the finest flowering shrubs, a profusion of roses and oleanders in full bloom, and an arborescent plant bearing an exquisite flower, half white, half pink, about the size of a camelia, but the petals were more loose. The effect of all this brilliant red among the shining foliage of the orange, was most splendid. Now and then we had a glimpse of the sea, with Acre in the distance, and Mount Carmel in the background, and then again it was concealed by downs. We likewise came in sight of an ancient aqueduct, perhaps five miles long; it looked like a cheerful veteran amid the youthful plants which encompassed it on all sides, with their rich and verdant

foliage. Part of the arches were of modern architecture, and here the plants did not thrive in the same luxuriance.

The nearer we approached Carmel, the more animated everything became, for it was the first day of the little Bairam, which closes the long fast. Proceeding through deep sand around the city walls, we reached the gate which leads to Carmel. Here we found the whole population, men, women, and children, soldiers and Bedouins mingled together, amusing themselves very peacefully. Two common and three Russian swings seemed to be the centre of attraction, and afforded great diversion. The smokers were sitting in large circles, enjoying their nargileh. Another object of interest was a small boat, which plied on the shore, and took such as had a mind for a short excursion on the sea, a ten minutes' voyage—for they had no sooner started than the boat returned for a fresh set of passengers. Parties of young men were amusing themselves on the damp, solid sand of the shore with leaping, and some of them displayed much agility. The children were neatly dressed in their holiday clothes; many in silk caftans, and all with small gold coins appended to their head-dress. How the women had performed their toilette did not appear, as the white veil inexorably concealed every beauty of figure or dress. A veil is graceful, but not when it enshrouds the entire person.

A few people of rank, with their attendants, and

several Arabs mounted on fleet dromedaries were riding among the crowd. There was neither music, dance, nor song ; but cannons were fired from the ramparts, and single musket shots, the chief demonstrations of joy among the Arabs, were heard at intervals. It was only half-past three when we arrived, and we might have reached Carmel by seven, but I was rather fatigued, or perhaps a little indolent, and was besides much amused by the motley groups around me, and we accordingly stopped at a khan near the gate. About sunset the people in the town dispersed quietly, and soon after, all was still.

The Orientals do not like to keep long vigils ; and though they are in some measure compelled to do so, by the strictness of the Ramadan, yet, as soon as it is over, they gladly return to their usual habits of retiring betimes, and rising early. The evening, however, was fine enough to induce me to remain in the open air, and I sat at the door of my tent a considerable time, contemplating my beloved acquaintances, the stars. When I say that I am acquainted with them, I only mean that I know them much in the same manner as we know many loveable persons ; we do not exactly know what they are, nor are we able to give any precise account of their qualities whether good or bad, but they are so constituted that we cannot help loving them. This is certainly the happiest kind of acquaintance, and such is mine with the stars. I looked up to them

shining in their bright illimitable sphere, while they looked down upon me grovelling in my little, dark-some world ; how vast was the difference ! and yet there was sympathy between us, for the best part of our being belongs to the eternal world of light.

I sought the evening star, which, like the eye of love, is always the first to wake and the last to bid us adieu. But it was gone, probably to follow the departed sun in his course. Suddenly a star of uncommon magnitude and brilliancy shone forth in the glorious firmament, and sank slowly and majestically into the ocean. Speaking of the stars, do you know why the Turkish arms bear a star in the crescent ? I was not aware of the reason till I met with it a short time since in Von Hammer's Ottoman Empire.

Among the Byzantines of heathen antiquity, Diana was specially honoured as Hecate, the goddess of night, as well as Phosphora, the harbinger of morning. As Hecate, the moon was her symbol, and as Phosphora, Lucifer, or Phosphorus, the star of the morning. She was always worshipped as the mild goddess of light. The Byzantines introduced her symbols into the ancient arms of their city ; these fell into disuse among the Christian emperors of Byzantium, but were afterwards reassumed by the conquering Turks, who, probably without knowing their origin, constituted them the arms of the empire, to ennoble their sovereignty by giving it the stamp of antiquity.

A goddess of light must surely be a graceful

symbol of the most delicate purity, the beauteous Anahid, the Persian goddess of light, is represented as surpassing them all. Her loveliness attracted two rival angels, Harut and Marut, who descended in human form to the earth, and wooed the mortal Anahid. She escaped their importunities by means of some talismanic words which she had learnt of them, and ascended into the skies, where she was welcomed by the immortals, who made her the genius of the morning star. And while the lovely Anahid, playing her aerial lyre strung with sunbeams, leads the morning dance of the shining stars, the two apostate angels are suspended by their feet in a well at Bagdad, where they teach men magic, till the bright stars shall cease to shine! Is not this fable as lovely as the star to which it gives a soul?

We can see only the walls of Acre from hence; opposite to the sea, they are still lying in ruins, just as Admiral Stopford left them after the bombardment in 1840, on occasion of the famous taking of Acre, which sealed the downfall of Mehemet Ali's government in Syria. How often has Acre been the theatre of war! Napoleon, you will recollect, fruitlessly besieged it in his campaign to Egypt. In the time of the Crusades it was a place of great importance; and, after untold hardships, was taken by Barbarossa, the son of Frederick of Swabia, who here instituted the order of the Teutonic knights, and who died and was buried here. Acre was the last fortress which the Christians retained in

Syria, and of which they were deprived in 1291, by the Mahometans. The Arabic name of the town is Akka, which signifies broken, and thus, in truth, it appears. A bay runs some way up into the land between it and Mount Carmel, which can only be approached by riding round the shore. To our left lay sand hills, or downs, which bound and protect the plain, that stretches out beyond them, from the inroads of the Great Sea.

We rode through two rivers, the last of which was the celebrated Kishon. On its further bank rises a beautiful palm grove, with underwood of oranges, pomegranates, figs, and St. John's bread-fruit tree, and extends as far as Caypha, which lies at the foot of Carmel. Here we began to ascend, at first very gradually, through an extensive olive grove, in which herds of goats and oxen were browsing; then, by a more steep ascent, over a good path, along the naked, chalky sides of the rock, till we reached the convent, which majestically crowns a projection of the mountain.

We met with a very cordial reception from the monks, who were astonished to learn that we had not met with anything unpleasant. The road is considered very insecure, and we indeed saw several armed Bedouins sneaking about the downs; but our party was probably too large for them to venture an attack. Here we have been again told that it is next to impossible to travel along the coast from hence to Jerusalem by way of Joppa, as the country is very

desolate, and the frequent resort of Bedouins. The day after to-morrow we shall set out for Nazareth; but there seems to be not much more security on that road, and from thence we hope to continue our pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I will write to you from Nazareth. Adieu! A thousand kind adieus!

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LETTER XXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS SCHÖNBURG-WECHSELBURG.

The Convent—Its erection and arrangement—The Carmelite Monk, Father John Baptista—A happy day.

Convent on Mount Carmel,  
October 26th, 1843. Eight o'clock A.M.

HERE I am! in the most lovely and elevated seclusion of nature. Before me lies the deep blue sea—a world of waters stretching out as far as my eye can reach, my thought can roam, or my earnest longings can speed, even into Heaven itself—which in the far, far distant horizon, imperceptibly blends with its waters, and seems to drink in its lovely waves. Its heart-reviving billows send up their music, melodious as seraphic strains, and fill my soul with awe and gladness. I have been thinking much of you, my precious Emy; for whenever my heart is full, I think of all I love; hence, in my happiest moments, a band of cherished spirits seem to hover round me, and these moments are perhaps my happiest, because the richest in mental



gratification. But your loved image, my Emy, is most vividly present with me in this sacred retirement; because you also would esteem a day in the solitude of Carmel one of the happiest of your life; it is so still and so peaceful, that it diffuses a heavenly calm, which penetrates the inmost soul. There may be views more picturesque and beautiful from the mountain crests of the Mediterranean, such as Taormina in Sicily; there may be convents more retired, and situated amid more lovely, diversified scenery, such as the Camaldoni at Naples; but neither at Taormina nor at Camaldoni do you feel the blissful solitude of Carmel, which seems destined by nature for a life of anchorite stillness. At Taormina the thoughts are distracted by gigantic ruins, Mount Etna, and the coast of Calabria; at Camaldoni they are even more dissipated by the entrancing beauty of an Italian landscape; but upon the rocky brow of Carmel, six hundred feet above the level of the sea, they can be concentrated at will, and grasp one mighty subject without distraction.

The boundless ocean rolls before you, and, if you *seek* for another view you may find it by turning northwards to Akka, the Ptolomaïs of antiquity, and the St. Jean d'Acre of the Crusaders; or southward to Jaffa, the Joppa of scripture. But these are in perfect unison with the scenery, and the promontories of Carmel form the link between Syria and Palestine. Here the sea, which has rolled from

the pillars of Hercules between two continents, lashes the shores of the third ; and this thought—this image satisfies the mind.

Persons of a lively temperament would not believe that it could be very attractive up here ; they would fancy that the monotony of the surrounding objects would soon weary the mind, and inspire melancholy feelings. A tender pensiveness of spirit, free from all dejection, appears to me to be one of the most enviable states of mind, because it is the happy point at which the passions cease to covet, and therefore begin to aspire to higher objects with greater ardour. We may be cheerful with others, and appear so to them, and all the while feel this pensive melancholy at heart. Mirth is suitable only to the exuberance of early youth, and there I never object to see it ; let others be merry if they can, for my part I never desire to be so.

Oh ! this solemn stillness ! it is as if the waves were rippling through my bosom, so that I no longer feel the throb of my own heart. I should like to lie down in them, and be lulled to sleep by their roar. What a blissful slumber, and what an awakening ! Oh ! the moment when in the presence of nature, one does not feel as an individual ! This merging of the spirit with the great spirit of the universe, this blending of one's own being, with the unbounded, essential all ; this dissolution of all passion in dreamy ecstasies ; this, this affords the most intense bliss. It is paradise ! the fulness of enjoyment

without, void or consciousness of want! If the latter is felt, if the former is sought for by our own exertions, we lose, we separate from paradise; it is a fall from heaven to earth, a humanizing of the spirit. Fallen spirits—I do not mean fallen, in a theological sense, as synonymous with sin, but fallen from the higher unbounded, to the lower bounded sphere—fallen spirits, such are men, and they must emerge from this limited and finite sphere around them, by aspiring to the infinite and eternal.

Carmel like Sinai, is one of the holy mountains of the East. Upon Sinai the law was given: "Thou shalt have none other God but me." And upon Carmel this first and great commandment was maintained in the days of the prophet Elijah. When the nation of Israel had departed from God, and followed the Syrian worship of Baal and Ashtaroth, then the Lord accepted the sacrifice of Elijah, and the altar which he had raised was lighted up by fire from heaven, while the altars of the priests of Baal remained cold and dead, because they had Gods besides the Lord Jehovah. This commandment apparently so easy, who among us does not transgress daily? who among us has *no* gods whom he treasures and cherishes in his heart? who among us has not seen with amazement his idol altars remaining cold and lifeless? who has not felt the power of the Almighty Prophet, with his strong arm shaking to its very foundation, his vainly imagined sanctuaries? and who does not feel the unceasing combat between

the principle of good and evil, the tendency to leave light for darkness, Jehovah for Baal.

Such was, and alas, ever will be the state of ruined man. In the profound solitude that reigns here, the heart opens itself more unreservedly and fearlessly to the light than it does in the world below; I therefore feel it good to be upon Mount Carmel, and can understand the oft repeated declarations of the scriptures of the Old Testament: "And the Lord spake unto him." The soul must be wholly abstracted from the world, in order to hear the still, small voice of God within, and to comprehend that inspired foresight into futurity with which those prophets were endowed. The heavenly visions and inspired revelations of these highly gifted spirits, emanated as irresistibly from them, as the conviction of the astronomer who affirmed: "in such a quarter of the heavens there must be a planet, and there is one, though it is not yet discovered;" and it was discovered.

The Carmelites pretend that the Prophet Elijah had a vision, which in the mysterious, symbolic language of the East, revealed to him the coming of the Virgin; and on this tradition the order of the Carmelites, or rather that of St. Mary of Carmel was founded. This order had originally no founder or rules. After the example of Elijah, Christian anchorites lived in the caves and holes of Mount Carmel, to give themselves up to the contemplation of heavenly things, and their model was held in the

highest estimation among all persons of the most opposed religious persuasions ; for they regarded the great prophet as a forerunner and messenger of the Messiah. To this day the Persian Magi regard Zoroaster as his disciple ; the Jewish Rabbis maintain that he is occupied in writing the history of every age of the world ; and the Mahometans imagine that he is living in a heavenly oasis, where the tree and source of life flourish and preserve to him, immortality.

Albert, Archbishop of Jerusalem gave the devoted inhabitants of Carmel a rule which was confirmed by Pope Innocent IV. Over the cave of Elijah a convent was erected, in which the monks might find refuge from the Saracens, and where they could hospitably entertain free of expense, the pilgrims who resorted to the Holy Land. They were however, dispossessed several times, and their convent desolated. When Napoleon besieged Acre he expelled the monks from this convent, which he turned into a lazaretto ; but at his departure, he left the poor invalids to their fate. They were taken by the Turks and murdered, and when the monks ventured to return to their convent, they found it filled with skeletons. They collected the bones in a cave, and a few years ago religiously interred them, under a small pyramid in their garden. The monks manifest much kindness of heart to the living as well as to the dead : the suffering, the oppressed, and the stranger, all are objects of their care.

The history of the convent as it now stands is very interesting, I will give you a brief sketch gleaned from a pamphlet by Alexander Dumas, which he wrote for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions for the convent. In the year 1819, John Baptista a Carmelite monk residing at Rome, received orders to repair to Palestine and examine the ruins of the convent upon Mount Carmel, and to see whether they were capable of repair. He found the convent in the state to which the Turks had reduced it, after the departure of Napoleon, plundered, desolated, and the doors and windows destroyed. The fraternity had gradually died off, and only one father was still living, who resided at Caypha, on the northern declivity of the mountain.

Father Baptista, who was an architect, soon saw what was to be done, namely: everything; but *how* to accomplish it was the difficulty, which was the greater, because Pacha Abdallah, who ruled in Syria at this very time was animated by an ardent hatred towards the Christians. He imagined that the opponents of Islamism might easily convert the convent into a fortress, and he therefore caused the shattered ruins to be undermined and blown up. The Greek war of independence broke out shortly afterwards; the Christians had less security than ever in Syria; and father Baptista, finding that nothing could be undertaken for the present, returned to Rome. But the thought that the holy mountain was no longer to be the abode of peace, com-

passion, and pious contemplation, no longer a home for pilgrims to the Holy Land : that wild animals, and yet still wilder Bedouins should house here, and render it unapproachable to Christians—this thought pained his inmost soul, and left him no peace.

More favourable times seemed to dawn upon him in 1826, and he accordingly proceeded to Constantinople, and by means of French interest and intercession, obtained a firman from Sultan Mahmoud, sanctioning the rebuilding of the convent, and he accordingly hastened to Syria. The last monk of Carmel had died in the interim, and John Baptista found himself alone among the ruins, without a counsellor or a sympathizing friend. He drew the plan of the present building, an oblong square; in the centre of which he placed the church, surrounded by the cells of the monks, and numerous guest chambers, in the upper story; and in the lower by magazines and rooms for stores of all descriptions : a mill, a dispensary, and in short all that might be requisite for the use of a convent situated in a barbarous country, and where every means of subsistence or cure must devolve upon itself. The building was constructed sufficiently strong and durable to bid defiance, in some measure, to the inclemency of the weather, to the lapse of time, the fury of destruction, and the rapacity of robbers. The plan being completed, he calculated the cost, which amounted to 350,000 francs, and which he resolved to obtain. The papal see gave him no support

in his work, and he was obliged to carry it out himself.

In the spirit of St. Theresa, the great reformer of Carmelites, with that confidence which bears within itself the pledge of fulfilment, with that calm indefatigable zeal, which does not for a moment lose sight of its object, he began a pilgrimage through the world, and solicited alms from Damascus to Gibraltar, from Morocco to Dublin, and whenever he had collected a certain sum of money he returned to Carmel, and the poor mendicant monk put forth his skill as an able architect. He of course completed his work; for an enterprise undertaken with such perfect devotion to a conceived idea, such entire self-renunciation of all personal objects, must succeed.

The convent on Carmel has stood for some years a charitable refuge, ready to receive and to provide board and lodging for Jews and Turks, Protestants and Heathens, for three days together, for the sake of God. Invalids are permitted to remain a longer time. It was limited to three days in order that one may make room for another. Besides this, those who stand in need of it, receive provision for their journey, bread and cheese, and if requisite some article of clothing. The building and fitting up have cost 500,000 francs, the whole of which Father Baptista has obtained by solicitations from high and low, from the prince and from the labouring mechanic. The beautiful marble floor of the church was presented



by the duke of Modena, the bells by the king of Naples, and the organ by his queen. The worthy architect now resides here as one of the six fathers of the convent; but he is unfortunately on a journey to Constantinople, so that I shall not have the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with him. Is it not delightful—here is a poor monk with an empty hand, but an energetic mind, and a full heart, and he procures everything, literally everything, the permission, the plan, the workmen, the money! and within ten years he has accomplished his undertaking on a princely scale; and that in our days!

A storm has passed over the sea. I was awakened very early by the lightning and the crashing of the thunder, mingled with the roaring of the billows. A hurricane arose, drove the clouds together, which poured down torrents of rain. I have passed the day in alternately writing and looking out of the window. At breakfast some of the monks gave us their company for an hour, and I strolled out once or twice to look at the garden. Now the sun is setting. What a beautiful sight! The fair blue sky of Syria is spread like a tent above the deep blue sea, and divided from it in the horizon by a streak of gold, from the centre of which, the globe of fire is suspended like a ruby in a golden necklace. Wearied of this earth, it sinks deliberately into the unseen abyss of water. Now it has set, and sea and sky, like soft protecting eyelids, close gently over it.

Such is the scene from my window ; for one row of apartments faces the north west. The rooms are vaulted, neatly white-washed, extremely clean, have large excellent iron bedsteads, with white curtains, and are furnished with everything necessary. The one which I occupy has the additional luxury of a sofa and a small toilette glass. Our fare is very good, cleanly and abundant ; and the friendly monk who acts as caterer sets before the stranger many little delicacies which he himself has prepared. Kermes berries are presented to the men, and orange-peel stewed in sugar to the women who may come here ; the latter dish is admirable, and I should have afforded him the greatest pleasure last night if I had emptied the whole plate : though his only remuneration would be the trouble of preparing a fresh supply for the next visitor.

The gardens of which I spoke are very small, and consist of a vegetable garden in front of the convent and a newly planted vineyard at the back of it. The only trees are a fig and two olive trees ; because the monks have neither the money to purchase others, nor time to attend to them if they had. They are now raising a wall round the entire building as a protection against wild boars that invade the garden, and jackalls which trespass upon the hen-coops, and the Bedouins who occasionally steal the fruit. These Carmelites upon the whole are not subject to the very strictest rules, for though bare-footed they are allowed to sleep upon a straw

mattress instead of a board ; but they do not lead the quiet, easy, indolent life, which is generally attributed to the inmates of a monastery.

Ave Maria ! they are sounding the knell of the departing day. How peaceful is the sound of the little bell, whose clear tone, reverberating through the solitude of the mountain, conveys to God the evening hymn of the soul, as the roar of the wind and the waves pour forth the vespers of Nature. Ave Maria ! is a salutation of peace ; therefore I hail you with it from Mount Carmel, my Emy, you and all my loved ones in distant Europe, and in the very heart of Germany. Would that, with the salutation, I could send you a portion of the blissful stillness that surrounds me here.

No spot I have hitherto seen on my travels, no place in the East, neither Olympus nor Libanus, neither the delicious shores of the Bosphorus, nor those of the Propontis, so rich in traditions, and in beautiful fables, has made such a sublime impression upon me, as Mount Carmel. I shall think of Mount Carmel as long as I live.

## LETTER XXVII.

TO MY SISTER.

Journey to and from Nazareth—Insecurity of the road—The  
Loca Sancta.

Convent upon Mount Carmel, October 28, 1843.

AGAIN upon Carmel! I have returned from Nazareth and, I am thankful to say, safe and sound; but I am in difficulty in regard to our future proceedings, for I found it was quite impracticable to proceed to Jerusalem direct from thence. I have decided on remaining here, till I see what arrangements can be made; for to Jerusalem I am *resolved* to go. The Bedouin tribes are in such a state of mutiny, that they lately drove back a division of two hundred troops which the pasha of St. Jean d'Acre had sent to quell the disturbances in the district of Nablous. Even under the escort of a Bedouin sheikh there is no security, as his authority is respected only by his friends, and not by his enemies; and you are as liable to encounter the one as the other.

The Padre Guardiano of the Franciscan convent at Nazareth, advised me to go back to Caypha or St. Jean d'Acre, and from thence proceed to Jaffa in a sailing vessel. The French baron, who when on board the steamer, could speak of nothing but the high connections of his wife, had followed this plan. Padre Federico, the Bavarian, gave us the same

advice here; but I have a great antipathy to sailing vessels, especially at this season of the year, when the hurricanes generally set in: besides, after landing at Jaffa our difficulties would begin afresh, for we should still have a twelve hours' ride to Jerusalem.

As we had travelled from Acre to Carmel, from Carmel to Nazareth, and back, constantly surrounded and watched by suspicious people, without any casualty, I had conceived the heroic idea of proceeding in the same manner to Jaffa. But this was considered a fool-hardy notion, and met with no sympathy. My travelling companions would not be answerable for all probable mishaps which might befall us; the good monks deemed it altogether impracticable; and our "rich man" vowed that he would not proceed another step without an escort, as he had already endured too much anxiety—unless, indeed, I would engage to replace his mules, should they be stolen. This I positively refused, and we accordingly decided upon the plan rejected at Nazareth, and dispatched a messenger to the sheikh of a neighbouring village, to solicit his escort.

If he will undertake it, we shall not have anything to fear, at least so asserts the worthy caterer, who, in troublous times once placed himself under his care. We shall scarcely proceed to-morrow, as the Arabs never arrive at a decision till after the most prolix discussions. I must have patience; but it is very difficult, as my time is precious, for we must

perform the journey through the wilderness in the latter part of November, as the weather might become too uncertain at a more advanced season.

Meanwhile we are once more at Carmel, which we reached at two o'clock in the afternoon, after an uninterrupted ride of eight miles from Nazareth. When we departed from Carmel, early yesterday morning, I really felt very sad to quit a spot which has interested me more than any place in Syria. I then thought I should never see it again; and as we slowly descended the mountain, and entered into the hazy regions below I mentally exclaimed, "Peace be with thee!" The morning was very sultry and oppressive, and when we had gained the olive yards, I turned to take a farewell look at the convent. A beauteous rainbow had flung its wide-spread arch over the sombre building. This unexpected sight gladdened my heart, "Hope spread her rainbow wings around," and rekindled my feelings of thankfulness, for though Carmel may no longer be to me, yet it will be to others the abode of peace, hope, and love.

We journeyed through Caypha, and along the Kishon, which flows slowly through a deep, slimy bed, and does not look as if it ever could have swept away the hosts of Sisera. Here in the ancient days of Israel the prophetess Deborah uttered a song of triumph, more wild and enthusiastic than we can now conceive. "The kings came and fought, they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven. The stars in their courses fought

against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon, O my soul! thou hast trodden down strength." I thought of the days when a woman slew Sisera, when a woman killed Holofernes, and a woman betrayed Samson, and when they were honoured for such deeds, so enthusiastic was the love of country. I cannot approve of it. Treachery may be a safe guard, but an honour it can never be; and to a woman it ought never to be accorded as such, for treachery is a weapon inherent in her nature, because she is weak.

In dwelling upon the horrors of the past I had no thought for the insecurity of the present. On a sudden our dragoman drew his pistols from his belt, and pointing to a distance, exclaimed, "Voilà des coquins." All weapons were in instant readiness, when a group of armed Arab horsemen appeared. I also prepared myself for *combat*, that is to say, I put my foot into the stirrup, took up the bridle which I generally drop for the sake of ease, and seated myself firmly in the saddle, in case we should be put to *flight*. It was, however, a useless precaution. Our caravan, which had been joined by three wanderers,—who according to the custom of the country were armed with club-like shepherds' crooks, and was thus augmented to nine men,—was too formidable a match for the four Arabs, and we ~~this~~ passed without being molested. They were wild looking young men, who would in all probability

not have left a lone traveller in the possession of his coat. As it was, they contented themselves with inquiring of one of our people who we were, and what was our object, and then passed on.

To this have my adventures among these Arab hordes been as yet restricted; but it is really very provoking that the mishaps of others should give rise to a host of obstacles, which often blasts a fair project, or engenders a dissatisfied spirit, which mars all pleasure. Both happened to me at Nazareth. I was anxious to go to the top of Mount Tabor, and to visit the Lake of Gennesaret, which have been rendered so interesting by the gospel narrative. This might readily have been accomplished with an escort; but as my reaching Jerusalem, the main point of my journey, was rendered so difficult and intricate on account of great insecurity, I resolved rather to give up every thing else, and without further digression or voluntary delay to set out for the Holy City. We had already seen Mount Tabor from the plain of Acre. The Arabs call it Djebel Tor, and indeed they always contract, abbreviate, and half swallow all names, so that it is impossible to write them according to their pronunciation. Yesterday we kept advancing still closer to Tabor, when we left the plain and the valley of the Kishon, and crossed the mountain ridge, between Jordan and the sea.

We were now in ancient Galilee. To our right extended far and wide the peaceful plains of Esdrae-



lon or Jezreel, so celebrated in Scripture, and so renowned for their beauty and fertility. This plain may be very rich corn land, and in spring be ornamented with the choicest treasures of the floral kingdom, but at this season of the year which is so peculiarly unfavourable to vegetation, I am sorry to say it had a very sterile appearance. We breakfasted at the village of Geida, but we did not see any plants in the environs except enormous hedges of cactus, as tall as trees, which serve as a defence against the jackalls, and low thorny, thistle-like plants which cover the ground in great exuberance, to the no small discomfort of pedestrians; it is here called the *spina-sancta*, but I am not acquainted with its botanical name. The declivities of the hills were covered with stunted evergreen oaks and bushes.

We had now lost sight of the sea, and of the more genial plants and trees; but the atmosphere is by no means chilly, for there are no high mountains in the neighbourhood, Carmel being only twelve hundred feet high, Tabor scarcely two thousand, and the others in the same proportion. We were not entering any grand mountainous country with wide spreading valleys and plains, but a hilly country intersected with ravines, hollows, and precipices, the calcareous and cretaceous formation of which appears to be confusedly thrown up and washed bare, so that it has an exceedingly dreary and barren character. The little villages do not present a striking

appearance, for they are built of the stone of the rock, and are generally imbedded in the hollows and ravines of the mountains. The houses are low, square, and very rudely built, with here and there an aperture for a door or window. They have the appearance of caves, and often recline against the rock; indeed I should imagine that many of them are excavated out of the rock itself, which the chalk formation would render easy, and to which its many natural caves seem to invite them. Sometimes these houses are covered with a clumsy dome or minaret; and this is a mosque.

Wherever there is a good supply of water, and the situation is favourable, plantations are made round the villages, chiefly of oranges intermixed with figs and St. John's bread fruit tree, and interspersed with vineyards, the branches of which creep along the ground and form the most beautiful festoons. Thus compared with the surrounding country they are like oases in the desert. When the plantations are scanty, a most melancholy impression is produced on the mind, as nature appears so altogether sterile and inhospitable. This is the case with Nazareth, which lies in a mountain hollow.

Such is the state of the place in whose obscurity, were veiled nearly thirty years of a life which diffused light, and blessing, and glory, exceeding that of any other in this our darksome world. This is the cradle of Christianity: Jesus of *Nazareth* was nailed to the cross, and his disciples more power-

fully animated by his death, which was human, than by his life, which was divine, went out into all the world, and preached the gospel to every creature. And thus the little sect of the Nazarenes, as the Romans disdainfully called them, became the germ of the wondrous, wide spread civilization of the world, which in the breast of every human being from the cottage to the throne, strives to unfold itself in one and the self-same blossom, the blossom of love.

What man wills, he wills from love — undivided love. Happy is he who has comprehended and embraced true love. Alas! alas! for the last 1800 years, men have endeavoured to make faith a law and love a science, to enforce the one and to teach the other; theologians dispute whether Christ was divine, how far he was so, how long, and to what degree; till they lose themselves in ungenial regions where reason tarries no longer at home, and where the heart feels itself a stranger.

I cannot comprehend how any one can call a life like his, other than divine. In the history of the world we meet with many lives full of greatness, purity, nobleness, self-denial and self-sacrifice; but compared with his they are mean, unimportant in resolve, and circumscribed in action; here tainted by a weakness, and there by a blemish, which are inherent in all that is human. Each casts a shadow—his alone excepted. From its earliest dawn to its close, all is uniform, ineffable light: this we call perfection, and perfection is the stamp of

divinity. He took a view beyond his own short life into the souls of men, such as he only can take who is all-sufficient in himself. Therefore he could say: "I have overcome the world," and by these words he indicated what man should strive to do, and what, in a limited sense, he may accomplish. And besides this, what a fulness of pity for every weakness, of consolation for every sorrow, of wisdom for every folly, of solace for every trouble, of grace for every error, of sympathy for every struggle, for all—all and every one who is engaged in the combat, and who has not yet overcome! Truly he was wholly divine, he was the highest manifestation by which God revealed himself to man, and the purest organ through which he ever spoke.

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And now, dearest Clara, I wish you to understand with what feelings I look upon Nazareth, and shall look upon Jerusalem and Bethlehem: with serious devotion, but not with remorse or ecstasy. You must not reckon on my critically and sophistically investigating and examining the various traditional spots and monuments, for example, whether Christ delivered the sermon on the mount on its eastern or western declivity, as is the order of the day, and which secures vast reputation to those who know how to place their own speculation in the room of ancient tradition. This requires much learning, perspicacity, and above all, a well

grounded conviction that something good and useful is to be effected by it. I am totally devoid of this three-fold requisition, especially of the latter, because I find that criticism is rarely useful, takes much and gives nothing in return: denounces a matter as false, and erects something in its place which it calls Truth, and which in its turn is subject to the criticism of others, and liable to be overthrown by them. Whatever spirit animates the bias of their judgment, you must follow it. I have it not, and I am glad of it; therefore do not reckon on my pointing out to you geographically and topographically: this is the site of the house of the Virgin Mary at Nazareth, &c. Eighteen hundred years indicate them as such—fifteen hundred years have covered them with churches and altars:—the consolation, the strength, and the peace which there flows in humble believing hearts has invested them with an awe-inspiring sanctity. And why not? "Because," says the opponent, "there is nothing but monkish tradition in favour of it."

Till the fourth century, Christianity was an oppressed, persecuted religion, and many of its followers had only tradition, which was preserved and handed down from generation to generation. And why should these ages have lost sight of the remembrance of the localities which had been rendered sacred by the birth, life, instruction, sufferings, and death of the Messiah; for the christian communities, though persecuted and oppressed, and

therefore the more strongly attached to what they held sacred, never became extinct in Palestine? It appears to me neither unnatural nor improbable, that, with the remembrance of the doctrines, the localities associated with them should have been cherished in the memories of the Christians of the three first centuries.

Thus Helena, the mother of Constantine, the first Christian empress, found Palestine and the Christians. The persecuted followers of Jesus now raised their heads; their palladium was no longer despised, but was invested with honour. What had long been concealed, was fearlessly brought to light, and they were permitted to resort to the spots of holy and mysterious interest. Helena built churches and chapels for the assemblies of the faithful, which have in effect existed ever since; for although destroyed times without number, and shattered to ruins by earthquakes and enemies, they have always been rebuilt on the same spot, for, from that eventful period, the nations of the world embraced the Christian faith. If, during the succeeding centuries, the monks were the only witnesses of the genuineness of those localities, it arose naturally from the circumstance that they, and the clergy in general, alone devoted themselves to literature. The Protestant clergy do not approve that Protestants should place any faith in the ancient tradition handed down by Roman Catholics; and they accordingly come with their theodolite, their chronometer, barometer, and

thermometer, and the whole learned apparatus of criticism—always begin their researches with the preconceived notion that they *must* meet with what is false, and they of course do meet with much that is false, and more that is questionable ; but whether they themselves arrive at the true and correct decision, remains to be proved ; and unless they can do so, and make all unquestionable and clear as the day, I do not see what is to be gained by all this labour and disputation.

In this spirit Robinson's work on Palestine seems to me to be written ; it appeared about the same time as that of the missionary Eli Smith, on Palestine, and caused a great sensation in Germany ; but as yet I am acquainted only with that portion which relates to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre. Their way of treating the subject met with much approbation in speculative Germany ; and I have undertaken to give to the American missionaries at Jerusalem the pamphlet of a Protestant clergyman who disputes the locality of the Holy Sepulchre without ever having been at the place ! This I call true German closet scholarship.

That among the numerous traditions there is much that is apocryphal, is so evident as to require no proof. Tabor for example, is not pointed out by any of the Evangelists as the place where our Lord was transfigured before his disciples, they merely state that he went up into "an high mountain ;" therefore it may just as well have been the neighbouring and

equally high hill of Hermon. Tabor, however, bears the glory of the transfiguration ; and what would be gained if we were told : " You have hitherto believed that this is the mountain ; but it is incorrect. You must believe that yonder is the true one." Hence we come to the conclusion ; " We will wait awhile ; perhaps in the interim the most true of all may be discovered."

To me, dear Clara, I must honestly confess that the anxious calculation on the one side, and the equally anxious assertions respecting this or that locality on the other, is but of little moment. I am in the land where the history of Jesus, fraught with the most wonderful and important events to all generations, was developed ; I stand upon the ground that was witness of his divine life, and this is enough. Churches and chapels do not occupy such a place in my heart that I should rejoice or fret, if instead of three feet to the right they lay three feet to the left.

With these feelings I regarded the Church of the Annunciation at Nazareth, built over the house of the Virgin Mary ; a small neat edifice with little ornament, and some ancient brickwork, which still encloses a decayed flight of steps in the rock ; thus too, the workshop of Joseph, and the table at which the Lord is said to have eaten with his disciples, a rude slab of stone. We were then conducted to the neighbouring well, which is called in honour of the Virgin, the Well of the Holy Mary, and



near which there are a few olive-trees. It was besieged by women, bearing large pitchers of clay upon their shoulders, who disputed with much violence for precedence, and seemed every now and then ready to tear each other's hair. As we passed through the village, the women, that is to say the Christians, called to me from within their doors, "Signora, buona sera! Come sta Signorita?" probably because they were interested in the presence of a foreign fellow-believer. The Mahometans laughed at me, and on inquiring the cause of our guide, he told me, a little puzzled, it was because of my taper fingers, which made me laugh too.

The Greek and Roman catholic population is said to amount to one thousand two hundred souls, and the Mahometans are not inferior in numbers. It was formerly much larger; but the fearful earthquake that desolated Syria on the 1st of January, 1837, in which thousands lost their lives, and whole districts were laid in ruins, fell with peculiar severity upon Nazareth. The pilgrims' house belonging to the Franciscan convent, where we were lodged, was built subsequently to that event; it is situated opposite to the convent, which, together with the church of the Annunciation, is surrounded by walls, gates, court-yards, and has the appearance of a fortress. Most of the monks are Italians; but a few of them are natives of Spain. By means of a school, the christian community is instructed in the

Italian language, and you are greeted in it, both by children and adults.

I was particularly pleased with the Padre-Guardiano. Every monk ought to have his mild, serious bearing, which, unhappily very few of them possess. This, combined with his musical language and delicate hands, imparted to him something peculiarly noble. He was young and handsome, like one of Leonardo's *chefs-d'œuvre*, with the colourless Lombardy complexion, and the reddish brown Capuchin beard. This sounds frightful, but is remarkably beautiful, and is a peculiarity of Leonardo. Now, for the first time, I saw it not on canvas. He likewise advised my returning to Carmel, and told me that three of the monks, who had nothing but their cowls, were robbed between Nazareth and Nablous.

I was sadly annoyed, and felt quite angry; and especially with the European Princes, who wish to be considered religious, and yet do not even provide for the safety of pilgrims visiting the holy places of their religion. Ought not France to be compelled to take it up as the ancient Protector of the Terra Santa, and of the convents, which lodge the pilgrims from station to station? Could not Russia effect this, since it would be comparatively easy, by reason of the preponderating influence which the members of the Greek church have obtained by their great numbers and wealth throughout the Levant? But political causes intervene, and hence the Powers of

Europe prefer according the Holy Land to the Turks, to granting it to one of themselves.

I mounted a little terrace near the pilgrims' house, and saw the sun sinking behind the neighbouring hills, and the silver moon travelling through the roseate clouds of the evening sky. My ill-humour vanished. I became melancholy, and could not help shedding tears. I had been longing to visit the lake of Gennesaret, the beloved sea of Galilee. There the disciples were at home: the poor fishermen, Simon Peter, and his brothers, and the children of Zebedee, whom Jesus called the sons of thunder; there they were mending their nets, when Jesus bade them leave all and follow him. And there our Lord himself was more at home than at Nazareth, where they refused to honour the prophet in his own country. Upon that lake, upon its banks, and the hills which encompass it, he passed the greater part of his eventful life, as recorded by the Evangelists.

There rises Tabor, and yonder the Mount of Beatitudes, where he spake of heavenly things; and there again, perhaps the wilderness where he prepared himself for his great work, and conquered the tempter. All these spots which were honoured by his heavenly life, I was not to see;—only that of his death: the obdurate Jerusalem. Perhaps his death will affect me more there, than it has yet done. I have always regarded it as so entirely in harmony

with the order of events, so completely answering and sealing the purpose of his mission, that, with all its accompanying circumstances, his death appears to me inevitable. But I was, and remained sad ; and as we turned and rode away early this morning, and the hills looked so clear and beautiful, the words of the Psalmist came to my mind : "The north and the south, thou hast created them : Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name."

But I could not rejoice, for not only had I seen so little of Galilee, but I was not to see anything of Samaria ; only Judea ; Perea, on the further side of Jordan yields but little interest in christian history. In the time of our Lord, Palestine was divided into these four districts, and hence Herod is called, in the gospels "the Tetrarch." In Rome you must read Tacitus, in Spain the Romances of the Cid, but here the Bible, the history of the ancient kings and prophets, because these books bear, in the most decided characters, and unvarnished colours, the impress of their times, and can be perfectly understood, only, in the country where they were written.

Here I clearly trace the closest affinity between the headstrong, tenacious character of the Jewish people, and the nature of their country ; and here in these rent caves, and upon these naked rocks, where the eye travels pensively from the stony earth to the cloudless sky above, I think I comprehend the melancholy, sublime obscurity of its prophets, who, wrapt in the mantle of mourning, with the stamp

of inspiration, in characters of fire upon their foreheads, walked among this people, who never forget, ever claim, and yet do not comprehend the promises of Jehovah.

And now, my dear Clara, I have poured out my feelings, till my heart is once more light and easy. What a happiness it is to be able to write! The paper retains the thoughts which unfold themselves readily, one after the other, affording a most delightful occupation, and a sure means of forgetting care. Our messenger has just returned, at half past nine at night, with the intelligence that the sheikh will undertake to be our escort as far as Jaffa, for two hundred Turkish piasters, about thirteen Prussian dollars; and that he will be here without fail early to-morrow morning. If all goes well we shall arrive at Jerusalem on the first of November: the obliging monks have thus calculated it for us, as our dragoman is not acquainted with this journey along the coast, because travellers naturally prefer the shorter and more interesting route, that leads direct from Nazareth to Jerusalem. I am glad that there is nothing to hinder our departure to-morrow morning. Adieu, dear sister.

## LETTER XXVIII.

TO MY MOTHER.

Departure from Mount Carmel—The Sheikh Nazir—Tantura—  
Morning on the Sea coast—Wells—Ruins of Cæsarea—St.  
Paul—Haram—Jaffa (Joppa)—The Plain of Sharon—  
Ramla—Journey across the mountains of Judea to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, November 2nd, 1843.

MY dearest mother, our pilgrimage was performed in peace and safety, and we entered the Holy City at four o'clock yesterday afternoon. Strange and peculiar feelings were awakened in my breast when I found myself upon the spot where in bye-gone days millions of men have fought and shed their blood for the sake of kneeling at one small spot of hallowed ground, and praying at the holy sepulchre. With what hardships did they struggle; with what zeal and energy did they combat; what privations did they endure, and what ecstasy rewarded their pilgrimages! "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" resounded from all sides, when they beheld it in the distance, and throwing themselves upon their knees, gave thanks to God, and sang hymns of praise. Jerusalem! They had reached their goal, and were now in the land of salvation. They fondly believed, that from the tomb of the Saviour flowed a stream of pardon, blessing, peace, and reconciliation, and they sought for it with the unrestrained ardour and enthusiasm of youth. But

the present age is hoary and chill, and incapable of such ecstasy, yet I should think there is not one, even in these lukewarm days, who could look upon Jerusalem with coldness or indifference; not I, most certainly, though I do not mean to rush headlong into it.

The rain is falling from heaven with that antediluvian flood-like violence, which, at this season of the year compensates for the long continued drought. I shall not quit my cell in the Casa Nova of the Franciscans to-day; but endeavour to realize where I am, and to prepare for all that I have to see and to do. My imprisonment will also enable me to give you some account of our journey, which we performed in four days; but notwithstanding all our preparations, it yielded very little worth relating, and not a single adventure; is not this provoking, after we had so fully equipped ourselves for it? In this respect our journey is quite in the style of Don Quixote, mistaking shadows for substances, flocks and herds for the redoubted knights of Micocolembo and Brandabarbaron, armed for combat with an imaginary foe, and always as in the act of flight from an enemy, who perhaps exists only in our fears. More than twenty times I thought of the valiant Frenchman, with his "*Je ne crois pas aux tigres car je n'en ai pas vu.*" But it availed nothing, I was obliged to proceed, as though I believed in them most firmly.

At seven o'clock on the 29th of October our escort made its appearance at the convent; and of what

do you think it consisted? Two men! The sheikh Nazir and his brother, who ran on foot by the side of our horses, for three successive days. Their arms consisted of guns, which forcibly reminded me of Nuremberg toys. And with these formidable weapons they intended to inspire the Bedouin tribes Abugosh, Beni Sahr, and however else they may be called, with respect and awe! The Bedouins are nomade shepherds who, with their herds and tents, wives and children, traverse the extensive countries, from the lower regions of the Red Sea to the Euphrates, and take up their abode wherever they can find pasturage and water, as their wants are almost entirely confined to these two main necessities. The different tribes have fixed circuits, within which they move from place to place, and from which they make hostile or predatory incursions into those of their neighbours. Thus their fathers did before them and thus they continue to do to the present day; and this is perhaps the only law by which they will submit to be governed with a good grace. They regard themselves as the true and only descendants of Ishmael, and are very proud of their distinction. The prophecy respecting Ishmael, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" has been accomplished in them from the most remote antiquity. They are for the most part Wahhabis.

The reformation of Islamism, which was commenced in Arabia, during the middle of the last



century by Abdul Wahhab, who asserted that he was bringing their religion back to its primitive simplicity, throwing aside all traditions, criticising all dogmas, and denouncing as useless many laws and customs, was too much in accordance with the Bedouin life of liberty, was too conformable with their character and being, not to meet with an almost universal reception among them. The orthodox Mahometan, for example, lays great stress upon offering up his prayer in a mosque: whereas Abdul Wahhab taught that all places were alike. The Bedouin in his nomadic life has no mosque, consequently the only extraordinary part of this new doctrine is, that it was not discovered before, because the different religious persuasions and their professors operate mutually upon one another, nor can it be otherwise if the latter are to be stirred up, and at the same time comforted by the former. Every tribe has its priest, who is called Chatib, and who is actually despised if he has the misfortune to be able to read and write. They also disdain the Fellahs, or settled peasantry, who in their turn have the most extraordinary dread of the Bedouins.

Our sheikh Nazir was the chief of a thieves' village; and we were informed by the procurador of Carmel, that he is not a Bedouin. He did not wear the very picturesque, simple costume of the Bedouins, whom we had seen in Libanus and Damascus: a white shirt, brown and white striped woollen mantle, and a yellow keffejeh fastened with

a hempen band across the forehead, and hanging over the neck and shoulders; but he was dressed in the costume of the Arab peasant in Syria, a shirt, caftan, and a loose dress, like a morning gown, which, in its clumsy shapelessness, resembles the European paletot. These dresses are so short that they barely cover the knees, and are for the most part worn out, faded and dirty, as the men lie on the ground, sleep in them, and seldom take off even the turban, except to use it as a pillow. The red tarbush, with a blue tassel forms the nucleus of a turban, round which they wind a long white cotton handkerchief; but while their head is so carefully covered, their legs are quite bare.

The costume has hitherto remained unchanged; but I must observe, that the so called paletot is quite an article of luxury, which perhaps only a sheikh and his brother may have the good fortune to possess. The costume is of a somewhat different character in the towns; instead of the shirt, or it may be, over one, they wear the wide Turkish pantaloons, which terminate at the knee, stockings or gaiters, though they not unfrequently have naked legs, and wear only a pair of slippers. The latter is the almost universal costume of the lower class of men: stockings and gaiters are associated with wealth, elegance, and distinction, and where these exist, the caftan invariably falls below the ankles, whereas the poor people curtail it at the jacket. They have a great predilection for gay colours, dark

red, sky blue, or orange and white, and other striped cloths, and consequently a group of these men talking together with great animation, and much gesticulation has a very striking effect.

I have not been particularly impressed with the beauty of their features ; they are delicate, it is true, but their expression is sometimes very cunning. When they are animated, either with joy or anger, they often assume quite a savage wildness ; at all events, here is physiognomy. Our sheikh was rather disfigured by the loss of his front teeth. I was assured that the Arabs had recourse to the painful operation of extracting the teeth, to escape being made soldiers in the time of Ibrahim Pacha : as they were thereby disabled from biting off the cartridge, in order to load their gun ; so I was told, but I do not understand it.

About eight o'clock we began to move. My feelings had been raised by the solemn sound of the little organ which accompanied the monks in their matins ; it is beautiful, even under inexperienced hands ; for like a psalm it always solemnizes the mind. We took leave of the monks with much gratitude, for they had shown us great hospitality and kindness, and I should advise every one travelling to Syria, so to arrange his movements, that he may pass two or three days upon Mount Carmel. When once we descended to the shore, we did not again quit it till we reached Jaffa.

Our only prospect was the blue sea on our right,

on our left, the white calcareous wall of rock, and before us the yellow sand of the beach, covered here and there with a thick layer of the most beautiful, variegated shells ; sometimes it was damp and firm as a mosaic floor, and sometimes so dry and deep that the horses sank below the ankle, and when they drew out the foot, the purling sand removed all traces. Ruins occasionally lay between us and the sea, and we always pitched our night quarters among them.

We were joined at Sidon by a famished Armenian pilgrim, who was journeying from the far distant Diarbekir to Jerusalem, and whom I protected, that is to say, supplied with food, because he had an honest countenance. An Arab on horseback, a friend of our sheikh, and two men from Caypha, who were also journeying to Jaffa, associated themselves with us at the foot of Carmel, so that we formed a pretty large caravan. We met many persons, both on foot and horseback, armed with club-like staves, guns, or lances ; as they approached, our sheikh or his brother always ran on before ; if he was acquainted with them, he saluted them with a shake of the hand ; but if they were strangers, he came to an understanding with them, and inquired after the " Arrab," as I always heard the Bedouins called, and the invariable answer was that they were rambling about on the distant mountains of Judea. This reply perfectly satisfied him, and we proceeded onward without hesitation. Whether we should

have had to apprehend anything from these people without an escort, I cannot say, but I believe not.

Most of the ruins which we passed were remnants of ancient fortresses. In one place we saw very distinctly that a gate between two pillars of rock had formerly commanded the entire road, which it could close at pleasure. Beyond, were the ruins of Atlith, formerly a castle of the Knights of St. John, but now a heap of stones. We were most disagreeably surprised when the sheikh made us ascend the calcareous wall at Tantura, at half-past one at noon, and informed us that we must pass the night in this village, as no other quarters were to be found on our next day's journey of twelve hours ! What was to be done ? We were compelled to remain. The ruins of an old fort had been converted into a khan, which was larger than these houses are in general, and had a court-yard which might be partially closed. Here our tents were put up, and the sheikh Nazir received the homage of his friends and acquaintance, who surrounded him and offered their salutations. In less than ten minutes between twenty and thirty people were seated around him upon their heels, chattering and gesticulating, while he squatted bolt upright in the middle as the centre of attraction. I ascended the flat roof of the building by a flight of broken steps, to obtain a view of the surrounding country. The village was perfectly bare ; a large and uncultivated, but by no

means sterile plain extended itself as far as the mountains of Judea on the one side, and to the sea coast on the other. It is protected from the encroachments of the sea sand, by a steep calcareous declivity of the rock. At present it serves only as pastures for the herds of goats and oxen. Many places were literally black with goats, whose milk is excellent, especially on Mount Carmel. The herds of horned cattle, which are also pretty numerous, consist only of oxen, which are employed in agriculture. I did not see any cows, nor did I taste cow's milk.

We passed a very restless night, the accommodation being far too confined for the number of guests, as besides our party, several travellers of the country had taken up their quarters here; among others two Derwishes who were on a pilgrimage to Mecca. The dogs—the oriental watchmen of the night—barked incessantly without our encampment, and for the first time I heard the whistling howl of the jackals who prowl round the villages for prey, during the night.

I was the first to awake on the morning of the 30th, and speeded our breaking up at four o'clock, as our twelve hours' journey was to be accomplished before sunset. We departed, it is true, before sunrise; but not till near six, as the packing and loading was a much slower operation than usual, because it had to be performed in the dark and twilight. Added to this a violent east wind had arisen, which scattered the things here and there, and put out

both fire and candle. In the grey dawn of morning, faintly lighted by the pale stars, in the midst of a boisterous storm, between foaming waves of the sea, and of tossed up sand, which were dashed together between the feet of our horses, we set out on our long journey. With us, at this season of the year and under these circumstances it would have been rather uncomfortable; but here, the ride along the sea-coast was so beautiful, so incomparably beautiful, that it will ever be associated with my most delightful recollections.

I had not been very well on my way from Beyrout to Carmel; while from Carmel to Jaffa I travelled as if my journey were a flight, and therefore felt under much constraint; yet, notwithstanding these discomforts I was always blissful at heart, when I sat on my horse in the early twilight, and rode beneath the diamond spangled sky, inhaling the balsamic breath of morn, and listening to the deep sounding waves of the sea. I was not lost in thought or contemplation: I felt only the vigour, freshness and vivifying power of nature, and suffered myself to be carried away by her, like the swimmer confiding himself to the gentle waves of the sun-lit deep.

These glorious mornings! I always had an intense love for the Mediterranean, and always have its coasts appeared invested with a golden splendour in comparison with which our northern shores look colourless as lead. There must have been more

than ordinary sympathy between my soul and nature here, for this coast is said to be desolate, tedious, and unlovely. I have freely told you of what elements it consists; but I cannot help repeating it, I felt blissful at heart. Towards noon, however, when the heat became intense, and in the afternoon especially, when the sun shed a dazzling glare over the sea, and the rocks and sands powerfully reflected his beams, my bliss regularly vanished and gave place to lassitude. This was especially the case on the 30th, when the wall of rock completely shut us in against the east wind, and the vertical rays of the sun streamed upon our heads with the heat of a furnace.

Here I learned the full value of two Arabic words, "Bir" well, and "Moje" water, and by the help of these two I kept up a lively conversation with sheikh Nazir, who, like a true knight, always remained near me. The result of our conversation was, that I actually took a draught of the pure element out of his bottle. Our luggage had remained a little in the rear, and as I was resolved on no account to detain our caravan, lest we should be too late in reaching our quarters for the night, I contented myself with a piece of bread and goat's cheese for breakfast, remaining on horseback, whereas we usually halt for half an hour at noon. Truly, I am inclined to fear that you will be ashamed of me, when you think of your daughter condescending to drink out of the bottle of an Arabian semi-bandit,



and to eat bread and cheese sitting on horseback! Yes, my dear mother, but this is not the worst, I even took off my blouse and rode without it, because the heat was so oppressive.

All this sounds to us as unheard of, impossible, frightful, only because it cannot take place among us. Here it comes as a matter of course, and he who cannot learn to drink out of the bottle of an Arab, will do best to stop at home; for with claims to European fashions, customs, and manners, it is impossible to make any way in Syria. The truth of the case is, the notions of decorum are different in different countries; but whatever is the *decorum* of the place, ought not to be a cause of offence to any sensible person: indecorum alone is offensive. With a *naïveté* which cannot be described, the people perform their toilet in the morning, and, with the most perfect nonchalance, they secure their garments when they have to wade through the rivers. This cannot be called indecorous; and he who thinks that it is, I repeat, will do well not to come here.

During the last half of our day's journey, and just as we stood most in need of them, we passed three wells. A border of rough stone is always placed round the mouth of the well, and if it is not too large, the opening is covered by a heavy stone that animals may not trouble the water. "They rolled the stone from the well," often occurs in the Old Testament, and the custom remains unaltered to this day. Deeper and larger wells, the water of

which cannot be reached by animals, are left open, and the people descend into them by means of a flight of steps to draw water. Stones, rudely hollowed out, trunks of trees, and sometimes only pits in the earth, where the ground is sufficiently solid, are placed near them, as troughs for the cattle. The shepherd fills them and patiently waiting, waters his flock one after the other, just as in the patriarchal ages.

We found a numerous flock stationed at one of the wells, and another was coming down the rocky wall to the second well, whence I concluded that there is no water in the neighbourhood of the villages situated above the rocks. You can have no conception what a commotion arises in a caravan when a well is known, or supposed to be near; indeed it is impossible for any but those who have marched half-a-day over burning sands, under a scorching sun, to form the slightest idea of it. The thirsty travellers hail it in the distance, and quicken their pace; some run on before, the horses press forward with all their strength, and push each other at the troughs. My poor pilgrim put his head between those of the horses, and drank out of the trough, as he found it impossible to make his way through the crowd that besieged the well.

At Tantura our caravan had been considerably increased by the addition of people who were either going the same way as the derwish, or waiting for

company who were travelling in that direction. Among these were a married couple. The wife trudged on perseveringly on foot, in order to keep pace with the caravan, while her husband seated quite comfortably on the broad saddle of his ass, smoked his pipe, and even made his servant wait upon him, while the wife was obliged to carry the bundle with their little chattels. This, too, is the custom of the East, and if the woman's feet were tired, her tongue certainly did not suffer by it. Whenever we came to a pretty deep river, the water of which reached up to the men's girdles, *the attentive* husband actually dismounted and waded across, while she seated herself upon the ass, but, nevertheless, became thoroughly wet.

About two hours' ride from Tantura, we observed along the shore mountains of rubbish, among which we descried, or fancied that we did so, walls, towers, and aqueducts. They are the ruins of Cæsarea, the once splendid city, enlarged by Herod the Great in the spirit and style of the Romans; now the abode of jackals and scorpions, and its walls and cisterns so broken and shattered that none can visit it in safety.

An overwhelming effect is produced upon the mind on beholding, not only individual temples, palaces, or amphitheatres, but an entire, large, magnificent city, with its walls and gates a mass of ruins; a city which, down to the times of the crusades, was a strong, fortified place, and the see of an archbishop!

Now it is effaced from among its equals, and will ere long be obliterated from the earth, if the sand and sea carry on their work of destruction.

The whole of the Syrian coast, especially Cæsarea, occupies an important place in the Acts of the Apostles. Here Paul sat a prisoner two long years, under Felix, the Roman governor, and here he made that noble defence before Festus, Bernèce, and King Agrippa, which forced the latter to exclaim: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." From Cæsarea, Paul was sent to Rome, and delivered to the captain of the guard, but "was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him." One may well conceive what influence a man like Paul must have had upon the Romans, who were fluctuating and unsatisfied between their lifeless gods, and saw in him, combined with the power of faith and conviction, the noble deportment and dignified eloquence to which they were accustomed, and which they so highly venerated. He, who could say of himself, "I am a man born in Tarsus, and brought up at Jerusalem at the feet of Gamaliel," was distinguished by the indelible stamp of culture and learning from the rest of the apostles, who had all their life followed a trade.

That a noble spirit, a cultivated understanding and profound erudition, are as capable of the most exalted degree of faith, as the unlettered and unlearned mind,—of this St. Paul is a glorious evidence.

To my great joy our twelve hours' journey was

performed in ten, probably because we had marched pretty rapidly; and at four o'clock we reached Haram, a little village, which like Tantura is situated above the rocky wall of the coast. We obtained permission to fix our encampment in the outer court of the mosque, which is of considerable dimensions, but were sadly disturbed all night by the howling of the jackals in our vicinity. There is nothing of interest at Haram except the ruins of an ancient fortress, situated on a neighbouring hill.

A ride of three hours along the beach brought us on the morning of the 31st to Jaffa, the Joppa of Scripture. We would gladly have retained the protection of the sheikh Nazir as far as Jerusalem, but he said that as he was unknown higher up the country, he could not be of any further service to us. We sat down under a large turpentine tree, in an open space before the gate of Jaffa, where a vegetable and poultry market was held. Here I paid him two hundred piastres, and gave him a bakshish, and a certificate of our satisfaction. He had just before, with great adroitness, taken a couple of eggs out of a market basket, which a woman, according to the custom of the country, was carrying on her head; and he was in the act of securing them most carefully in his broad girdle, when he saw that I had observed him. Without suffering himself to be in the least disconcerted, he gave me a significant look in token of understanding, and after awhile, going up to the woman, gave her back the eggs, admonishing her to

be more careful of her basket for the future. He then looked at me with the greatest self-satisfaction, as if to make me believe it was only a pleasant joke ; but by this time I was perfectly aware that, to regard other people's goods as their own, is an Arabic custom.

Jaffa is most lovely and very beautifully situated ; it is so thickly embosomed in orange groves, interspersed with pomegranates, vines, and dark leaved figs, that many trees are lost to the view amid the rich mantling foliage of the luscious grape. Large plantations of sugar-cane extend to a distance, and isolated palms and tamarisks are scattered here and there, while splendid hedges of cactus and acacia encompass the city. The most luxuriant grape vines entwine themselves in graceful festoons around the irregular arms of the grotesque cactus ; and brick wells, arched over with a dome, yield abundance of water, and add to the beauty of the landscape. Here we may form a lively conception of the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, and a wish arose in my heart that there were more here to participate in the fulness of this blessing.

The town stands upon a hill which projects into the sea. About half way up its declivity lies an old castle with round towers, in the solemnity and picturesqueness of the middle ages. The gate at which we halted, and which is also ornamented with little towers, has an equally pretty effect. A stately company met us, probably merchants, who inquired

of us in Italian respecting the arrival of the Austrian steamer at Beyrout. Several Jews also came up to us in the hope of transacting a little business. They were especially taken with our travelling-table, and one of them inquired whether it could not be purchased. I have a great respect for the Jews, on account of their unconquerable adherence to the law of their fathers; no similar instance is to be met with in the history of the whole world. We everywhere find the vanquished nations becoming the servants, and, after the lapse of centuries, adopting the religion of their conquerors: but the Jews, though scattered throughout the world, and every where cruelly used as servants, bondsmen and slaves, on account of their religion, have, nevertheless maintained their faith inviolate against Islamism and Christianity. This I respect in them, while I at the same time detest their mean peddling spirit, which cannot see anything without estimating its value.

After our dragoman had procured the necessary certificate of health which is demanded of travellers at the gate of Jerusalem, and had likewise obtained satisfactory information respecting the safety of the road, we mounted our horses and proceeded for a considerable distance through the splendid, luxuriant gardens of which I have spoken. Citron-trees bent beneath the weight of their golden fruit, of which we procured a dozen for half a piastre; the pomegranate was assuming its delicate vermilion hue;

the banana was ripe, and bunches of dates were hanging in rich clustres from the graceful palms. I wrote to you from Carmel, that on the road to Nazareth I could understand the wild melancholy of the ancient prophets ; but here, my dear mother, I can apprehend the tender, glowing luxuriance of the Song of Songs, which, like a beauteous, fragrant flower, is entwined in the diadem of wisdom, of the wisest of kings.

As soon as we had passed through the lovely gardens, we entered the extensive plain, which runs between the sea and the mountain, along the whole length of the Syrian coast, sometimes broad and sometimes narrow, and is known by the name of the Plain of Sharon. We now turned our backs upon the glorious sea, and rode inland for three hours and a half towards the little town of Ramla, gladdened the whole way by the sight of the mountains of Judea, which have to be traversed in going to Jerusalem. The plain of Sharon is a fruitful arable and pasture land, over which are scattered a few turpentine-trees, occasionally a well, and here and there some burying places. "But, shrouded in grief, thy roses, O Sharon, bloom no more." Thus sings the poet Bechstien, and the melody of that strain which has long dwelt upon my ear, is re-echoed in melancholy truthfulness on all sides around me. In this plain lies Ramla, which presents throughout an oriental appearance, unlike that warlike impress of the middle ages, which characterizes the other towns



along the coast, especially Beyrout. The houses are low, white buildings, with flat roofs, surrounded by fretwork galleries, with cupolas, minarets and terraces, interspersed with ruins, over which palms and other tender, graceful trees, like the delicate azederach, gently incline their heads; while the giant cactus rises, like a rampart, in the breaches of the stone walls.

The fine ruins of a tower, — a stranger from the west, however, attract the eye, in the midst of this genuine oriental picture. It is called the Tower of the Martyrs, because a large number of the knights templars fell here, not long before this religious military order left the Holy Land. It was a part of the buildings of their convent, the church of which was subsequently converted into a mosque. The church of the knights of St. John shared a similar fate. Much of architectural interest is probably closely concealed here, for the Turk cowers upon every thing, as the griffin broods over his treasures, which he may indeed guard but knows not how to estimate.

A convent of the Terra Santa, whose pilgrims' house was founded by Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and a large Greek convent entertain the pilgrims who visit Jerusalem in large companies every year, especially at Christmas and Easter; even we, after we had looked about us a little while at Ramla, were called Nazarenes and Hadjis, that is pilgrims. I was by no means pleased to waste

half a day at Ramla, and as we were to join a caravan which was to set off at two o'clock in the night I did not like to put up at the convent, as we should have caused a disturbance there by leaving so early. We were, however, very badly off, for an unceasing firing was kept up in the plain during the whole night. Our people took it in turn to keep watch, for "the rich man," who is positively a species of griffin, insisted that there were robbers abroad. Whenever a pause happened to ensue, the dogs instantly set up the most desperate and enraged howling and barking. It was a wretchedly uncomfortable night, and in the middle of it I received the unwelcome intelligence that the caravan was not to start. I therefore laid down again for a couple of hours in the hope of getting a little sleep towards morning, when the firing should cease, but by five o'clock we were all equipped for our journey. When I quitted my tent and stood under the soft veiled firmament of night, which in the east is bounded by the pale streak of morning twilight, the stars still shone clear and bright: one of these brilliant orbs I love especially because it always stands above me in the firmament of heavens; I know it face to face, though not by name. I hailed its sight, and thought of the magi, who were guided by a star from the East to Bethlehem.

I was in the most anxious expectation till six o'clock, when we at last set out. I urged haste from joyous impatience, and Giorgio from anxiety to

gain the hills, as the marauders roam only in the plain of Sharon. We were proceeding at a quick trot, when "the rich man" suddenly protested that his mules were not equal to such violent marches on long days' journeys. Words ensued; but as the dragoman would not slacken his pace, the "rich man" beckoned to his Sancho Panza, who flung himself upon his ass, and both rode off in a tangent. It was highly comical, and yet most childish, for where did he mean to go, as we had safe possession of his horses? We rode rather slower, and indeed, we were compelled to do so, as we began to ascend along the mountain gorges, and on seeing this he soon came back. We were three hours and a half in crossing the plain, and as long in ascending; but our way always led through a defile, and then over a ridge, then again through a defile, and over another ridge, so that it seemed as if we were never to reach our destination.

The mountains of Judea are built upon, much in the same way as those in the vicinity of Nazareth, with villages surrounded by gardens and plantations. These are situated, partly on the declivities, and partly in the hollows, but upon the whole they are much scattered. The character of the mountains is inhospitable, and the olives, which in some few spots form a grove, look very melancholy, with their pale foliage and hollow trunks. The road was animated with peasantry, who suffered us to pass unmolested. On one occasion, however, we were a

little startled by an Arab who laid hold upon the gun of my travelling companion, though probably only from inquisitiveness, as a double barrellled gun is a great curiosity among them. We also met a European traveller with his attendants, at whom I could not help staring, not because I was overjoyed at beholding a European, but because of his singular appearance, for he was mounted on horseback in a black frock coat, with a foulard as keffejeh under his hat. I have seen many strange things in the course of my life, but such an incongruity never ! It was really most absurd upon the mountains of Judea.

On entering the beautifully sequestered village of Kirgat el Enab, the ancient Kirjeth Jearim, our dragoman gave us the welcome information that we had now reached the highest summit of the mountains. After we had halted awhile, we recommenced our journey, but the tantalizing ascending and descending still continued. Groves of citron, bright as emerald, rose near a cheerful brook, and encompassed the village of Colonia. Here a number of children ran to meet us, with pitchers of water, doubtless a most welcome sight to weary pilgrims who have travelled on foot ; I, however, refused the pitcher which was offered me by a little girl, who was thereby disappointed of the expected baks-hish ; and, when the poor pilgrim wished to take a draught, she hastily snatched away the pitcher. The love of money among these people, even among the youngest children is really quite grievous. That

they will not permit the rich to take a draught of water gratuitously, is not so very surprising considering its scarcity, and may perhaps find a parallel among us who have it in abundance ; but to deny a drink of cold water to a poor man, one of their equals, is really heartless.

Eager expectancy, excitement, and fatigue, combined to make me feel very faint ; we had still another acclivity to cross, and to traverse a frightful stony desert, which was also rather hilly. The poor pilgrim eagerly ran on before, that he might be the first to give the joyful intelligence that we had reached our goal. Soon his enthusiastic cry announced that we had indeed reached it : Jerusalem lay before us ! High, solid walls, cupolas, minarets, massive towers, and a few heavy, shapeless, buildings, were spread over this dreary plain, of the stones of which they were built ; behind the city rose the barren mount of Olives, still of the same grey colour ; while sombre olive-trees were sparingly scattered here and there : no smiling green—no running water ! parched sterility to the very mountain tops.

Thus Jerusalem presented itself to our view. My heart sunk within me, and we rode onwards in silence. On a level place by the road side, the Pacha was halting with his suite, and exercising some of his soldiers in throwing the djerid. The Jaffa gate of Jerusalem had all the appearance of a fortress ; it is not in a dilapidated state like most of the city gates in

the East, but is very strong and firm. We passed under it. Then, quickening our pace across a ruinous place, we rode through several narrow, gloomy, streets till we halted at the convent of San Salvador.

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## LETTER XXIX.

TO MY MOTHER.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.—Casa Nova.

Jerusalem, November 3rd. 1842.

WHY does man place the crown of glory only on the brow of the illustrious dead? Why does he constitute the grave, the inevitable gate to apotheosis? Why from the tomb alone does the light emanate which discloses to him the greatness and the excellency of the departed? Is it because man regards the corporeal being as his equal, and compelled by the melancholy consciousness of his own imperfections, always ascribes to it more weakness than power, more selfishness than self-devotion? Or is it because, that in affinity with his spiritual nature, the invisible becomes divine and eternal, while the visible remains terrestrial and finite. The tomb of a great man produces upon the majority a more powerful impression than the places associated with his life, and hence the Holy Sepulchre which inclosed the remains of him, who alone of all that ever

lived, ought to be called *Holy*, is the spot to which every pilgrim first of all directs his eager steps.

The keys of the church of the Holy Sepulchre are in the possession of the Turks, who always keep it locked, except during the hours of divine service. Ibrahim Pacha has abolished the tax formerly levied upon every visitor, and nothing beyond a voluntary acknowledgment is expected; the rapacious door-keepers, however, cannot be avoided, for they actually sit within the very entrance of the church on a broad divan, smoking and drinking coffee.

The Latin convent of St. Salvador is at no great distance from the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The streets are crooked and narrow; the houses are built of stone, and, like those in Damascus, have low doors and scarcely any windows. The ground between the convent and this church is extremely uneven, alternately rising and falling. At the end of a street we descended by a flight of steps, and further on, by two very broad ones which lead to the great square, a large open court paved with flags which are actually worn by the feet of innumerable pilgrims; here was congregated a motley assembly of sellers of rosaries and crucifixes, beggars, devotees, idlers and pilgrims. The façade of the church, which is richly adorned and half-decayed, presents a striking contrast of wondrous beauty and extraordinary meanness: capitals and friezes of the most elaborate workmanship surmounted by a bare

wall with broken windows. The appearance of the church is very confined, being shut in by the adjoining buildings which belong to the Greek monastery, situated on the opposite side of the way. The prevalent style of architecture in Jerusalem is the dome, which could not be combined with the tower—and as the domes are not to be seen when standing in front of the façade, the edifice has scarcely the appearance of a church.

The interior however is totally different. Here is a world of churches and chapels: here are all creeds and sects of the Christian religion, except those that emanated from the Reformation. Here prayer is unceasingly offered, an uninterrupted worship of God carried on; here a deep, overpowering solemnity prevails, and attunes the soul to the contemplation of heavenly things; and methought the ever-burning, golden lamps which shed a fitful light amid the surrounding gloom, were meet emblems of the little flame of faith, hope, and charity, which is here shed into the heart of the worshipper. The whole appeared a symbol of the true church of Christ, which he lived and died to found: a union of love to the honour of God, and the devotion of the world, under the veil of different forms. I folded my hands in silence; it was a moment of holy and thrilling feelings.

We began our wanderings through this remarkable church, which is built upon the summit and declivity of the rock, with visiting the most holy



place. We are in the East, dearest mother, and of this we are constantly reminded. In this country stood the magnificent temples of the various religions which prevailed before the time of Christ, the most sacred part of which was always a peculiarly consecrated place, which was only open to the priest for prayer and sacrifice, or to the worshipper for the especial strengthening of his devotion. This church resembles these ancient temples, not only in form but in destination, and is built over the tomb of Christ, upon the same spot which the Emperor Adrian gave to the Faithful. When the Emperor Constantine afterwards erected a Basilica over it, the original little house of prayer probably remained as a nucleus of the larger building. It is now a small chapel of beautiful white marble, which stands in a circular hall under the high dome which is supported by arches. It is divided into two small sanctuaries, the first is a kind of vestibule, and the second a narrow space, which encloses the tomb of Christ; the first is called the vestibule of the angels, because the sorrowing women met them there at the entrance to the tomb; opposite the door is the stone on which the angels are said to have been seated, when they replied to the Marys: "He is not here, but is risen!"

Stooping through a low, narrow doorway, we entered the chamber of the sepulchre, which was originally hewn in the rock, but retains nothing of its primitive material, except the oblong stone in which

the body was laid ; and even the upper surface of this is covered with white marble ; it looks like an altar, and indeed it serves as such when mass is read here. Forty-four perfumed lamps of gold and silver constantly light this solemn, dark spot, which is probably the only one upon earth which no one ever trod without seriousness and deep reflection, and where tears have flowed, and prayers have been offered, such as no other spot ever heard or witnessed. This conviction greatly tends to deepen the solemnity of feeling, and to consecrate this place as though angels still continued to watch by the Holy Sepulchre ; aye, and would continue to watch as long as there shall be “ weary and heavy laden ” hearts upon the earth. This, my dear mother, was my feeling, and perhaps I may seem cold in comparison with others who have contemplated the sepulchre, overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish. Such was not my case. I felt, indeed, that it was holy ground, but I was rather strengthened and invigorated, than subdued and broken hearted.

In front of the altar there is room for about three persons, and this fills up the space of the little sanctuary. As I entered, I saw a pilgrim standing in the opposite corner, and praying. He was an old man, with a long beard, white as snow, and had a fine, noble, and serene countenance. He had no rosary, nor did he move his lips in prayer, or drop a tear ; no, he stood silently in the corner, leaning against the wall, his folded hands resting upon his

pilgrim staff, but his soul was with his God. This is prayer.

The rotunda, in the centre of which the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre stands, is surrounded by arches, through which we passed into the vestibule and church of the Roman Catholics — the Latins, as they are called here. It is confined, mean, and dark, because the Latins are not only destitute of the great riches of the Greeks and Armenian churches, but are in fact, very poor. There is a small adjoining building which is occupied by those of the Franciscan monks who have to perform alternately, but without intermission, the sacred functions of their office. It is said that above this apartment there are, or were Turkish stables; this seems indeed strange, unless we bear in mind that we are standing upon what was originally a very irregular hill, the cavet and summit of which have been skilfully united with the church into one whole.

This part of the building lies several feet lower than the Greek church, which adjoins the rotunda, and is splendidly and richly ornamented, kept up in a magnificent style, and is unquestionably the most imposing. It is likewise vaulted with a dome, and the choir is divided from the cave by a wooden latticed screen, most tastefully carved, and richly gilt. The usual frightful and overladen decoration of the Greek churches, of pictures, gilding, carved work, and adornings of purple silks is here in the highest degree tawdry and extravagant. It is sur-

rounded by a dark arcade, or cloister, in the niches of which are chapels, founded in remembrance of events connected with the crucifixion ; one of the scourging, and the other of the crowning with thorns ; another is called the prison of Christ where he awaited his last moments ; while in another, the soldiers are said to have cast lots for his vesture.

We then descended twenty-eight steps into the sombre, picturesque chapel of St. Helena, which belongs to the Armenians, and through this, thirteen steps lower down, to the cave where the cross was miraculously discovered, and which has also been converted into a chapel. On returning to the cloisters, we went a little further, and by means of a steep stair case, of twenty steps, we ascended to Golgatha, the place of a skull, where two altars have been erected. At the foot of Golgatha lies a slab of reddish marble, upon which our Lord is said to have been anointed when he was taken down from the cross. And here we were again at the large entrance gate.

When you have seen the spot, it is easy enough to picture to yourself the whole scene ; to the right Golgatha, to the left the declivity of the mountain, and the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea in a garden. This has vanished, and Golgatha no longer retains its slope, but by means of mining and levelling has been converted into a mass of rock upon which the altars are placed, while, further back to the right, on the side opposite the tomb, is the cavern in which Helena discovered the cross. These are

the principal points; but there is also a chapel of the Syrian sect of the jacobites, close to that of the Latins; a very wretched one belonging to the poor Copts, which stands in the rotunda at the back of the wall of the most holy place, and consists of a sort of wooden box, not much larger than a confessional, and the door of which was fastened with a pack thread.

In the vaulted passage behind the Greek church there are several doors which lead to the buildings of the Greek convent, and to the cells of those priests and monks, who, like the Franciscans, have dedicated themselves to perpetual devotion. One door leads into their kitchens, for the Greeks who, by their numbers, wealth, and interest, have possession of the most important of the Loca Sancta, and have consequently the most power and influence, make themselves more comfortable here than the other bodies of Christians; indeed, they bake, and cook, and have a regular household in the church; while the Latins and Armenians must content themselves with having their meals brought to them from their respective convents.

Yes, my dear mother, now comes the fearfully dark side of the picture of this church. If you already find too many chapels, if you are fatigued with the multiplicity of altars, if you feel that the lofty columns distract the mind with too many minutiae, and that the accumulation of objects for the eye is not soothing for the soul, which longs for

some great overpowering impression, how sadly is the spirit depressed and wearied to hear at every step a declaration to whom the several churches, chapels, and altars, nay, even the individual archways belong; how many ever-burning lamps each denomination is entitled to light; where, and in what succession they read mass, what rights each claims in ecclesiastical functions; how they envy each other, and always fancy that they are overreached and supplanted by other persuasions; in what hatred, enmity, and strife they live. Then, alas! the heart may well be overwhelmed with sorrow.

I had already heard much on the subject and was partially prepared for it, but I had not expected to find it carried to such an extreme. All this hatred and quarrelling is in honour of Him who taught and bequeathed Love and Peace! We know not whether we shall say, "be not so foolish," or, "be not so wicked." There they live together on the most holy spot in all Christendom, day and night persevering in prayer—thirty Greek priests, fifteen Armenians, and twelve Franciscans, and the pious thoughts which they *ought* to have in common, inspire them with no feelings of brotherly love.

The Latins appear to me to be rather oppressed since the great fire in the church, in 1807. At that time the Greeks, by means of their riches, were at once ready to rebuild and repair it, by doing which they acquired a claim to the whole; not exclusively

indeed, but so far, that they are considered as the keepers; and thus the guardianship of the Holy Sepulchre, which belonged to the Latins, was transferred to the Greeks, who besides, likewise possess the largest church, the altar of the crucifixion at Golgatha and several subordinate places. The Latins must now be content with secondary altars and their own narrow gloomy church; no piece of ground on which a numerous population has settled can be more accurately distributed, more strictly bounded and more carefully turned to account than the church of the Holy Sepulchre.

My feelings gradually became colder and colder, so that I quietly turned to the historical interest, and considered the place more as a kind of holy museum. The kitchen where the Turkish doorkeepers prepare their coffee, and the niches of the Armenians, with their bed-pillows are highly offensive to me in a church. The sacred edifice has no pretension to architectural beauty: it wants unity, harmony, and internal connection; but, possessing a spiritual centre in the most holy place, it has notwithstanding, a powerful effect, and it is some time before we perceive on looking around that the soul, but not the eye, has been able to discover *that* centre as a point of repose. From this agglomeration of churches and chapels, which are united into one whole by means of passages, steps and staircases, you may form some idea how irregularly several parts must bear on each other, and that it must have required

much architectural skill to combine them in their present order.

The Basilica of the Emperor Constantine was destroyed by Cosroes, King of Persia, who conquered Jerusalem in the year 614; but the Byzantine Emperor Heraclises restored it fourteen years afterwards. The Caliph Omar who took the city in 639 spared the church, but the fanatic Caliph Hakem, of the family of the Egyptian Fatamites, again laid it waste in 1009, but subsequently gave permission to restore it; till at length, in the twelfth century, after the crusaders had founded the Latin kingdom in Jerusalem, it was built by these kings, nearly in its present form, and all the *loca sancta* for the first time united into one church under the same roof. I say nearly in its present form, because it is stated that some changes were made on rebuilding it, after the great fire of 1807.

Thus then it is likewise venerable for its great antiquity, and interesting as a building of that transitory kingdom, which so decisively proves that courage, bravery, and short-lived enthusiasm suffice to gain conquests; but that wisdom and prudence are indispensable to retain them. The plain sarcophagi of the noble Godfrey of Bouillon, and of his brother and successor Baldwin the First, are placed in front of a small chapel. Though the plastic arts were employed in adorning the church, I was sorry not to find any productions of genius. Two alto relievos in marble, and two paintings are introduced into



the most holy place, but they certainly do not tend to adorn it; I have already spoken of the tawdry ornaments of the Greek church, and the Armenian church of St. Helena is still more gaudily dressed out, with golden tassels and ostrich eggs exactly like the mosques, and with glories of thin silver plate round the heads of the painted pictures of their saints.

On the church being opened for our admission, it was soon filled with visitors; many indeed might have been locked up in it with the priests of their respective religions, as it is a very prevalent custom for pious pilgrims to pass three days and nights, or twenty four hours, or at least one night, within its precincts. It was delightful to observe the devout manner in which each, without taking notice of another, hastened to the place of his devotions. Here the poor Copt, wrapped from head to foot in his dark blue mantle, stood like a melancholy shadow before his miserable oratory; and there knelt the black Abyssinian, and kissed the stone on which the sacred corpse had been anointed: soldiers of the Albanian corps in their fantastic dress performed their genuflexions before the altar of Golgatha, and Russians, with their sheep skins and cropped heads, eagerly pressed forward with astonishment into the splendid Greek church; while women with large handkerchiefs over their heads, and pilgrims from Greece, and the south of Russia hastened to the most holy place which, as it can admit only a few persons at a time, is always surrounded by different

groups. Greek and Armenian priests in their black, mortar-shaped head-dresses, and Franciscan monks, barefooted and girded with a cord, wandered about among the crowd. There were also several travellers and visitors who, like ourselves, were semi-pilgrims, if I may use the designation, for we are not overburthened with the genuine spirit of the pilgrim, but have some liberty of thought for investigation and observation.

The effect of the whole was most imposing, and my inmost soul was deeply moved. I was standing in the oratory of a world, whose inhabitants were crowding around their altars. In this immense community individual dissonances and severities are dissolved. The limits drawn by the different persuasions disappear, before that spirit which soars above all limit; even the secular occupations, the Turkish doorkeeper with his pipe and coffee, the sleeping cells, and the kitchen, merged from their dark shadows into milder twilight. Thus we ever see that the base things of the world serve only as a foil to those that are holy.

I shall often repair to the church of the Holy Sepulchre; but I was anxious to give you some account of my first visit, since the first impression is always the deepest; when once you are acquainted with a locality, you become accustomed to one thing and criticize another, and, in every case, the page of the mind upon which the second impression falls is no longer blank, because the first is already

inscribed thereon. You must not imagine that I shall keep vigils here ; I know pretty well how much mind and body can bear, and they are certainly not equal to a night spent here in holy contemplations. I shall therefore defer my visit till the wakeful, energetic hour of morning ! Roman Catholic women have their places assigned to them for the night, by the side of the organ of the Latins, the only one in the church, and even Protestant women can be accommodated there ; indeed the Latins receive all the strangers with the greatest liberality, I mean liberality of sentiment, for their convent is not nearly so large, nor so well arranged as that on Mount Carmel, because the Terra Santa is impoverished, and this, as the Mother Convent, is obliged to support all the rest. However, it does what it can.

Our arrival was rather inopportune, for the Casa Nova was occupied not only by travellers, but also by the chancelry of the French Consul. The school is generally kept in two small dwellings in the town, which, however, the Consul has also taken possession of, till his own residence shall be prepared ; and the children are therefore instructed in some confined buildings attached to the convent. The Internuncio, not satisfied with giving me a letter of introduction, had likewise sent a written communication from Constantinople, so that the monks were really in some little perplexity. They, however, received me with the greatest readiness, and immediately caused an apart-

ment to be arranged for me. As no shelter could be obtained till it was prepared, they took us across the street into a sort of vestibule belonging to the church where we were regaled with coffee, comfits, and lemonade. Father Jean Battista who had journeyed with us from Smyrna to Beyrout here favoured us with his company, with several other monks. The Prussian Consul, whom we met under the gate, and to whom we had also brought letters of introduction, likewise joined our circle.

I cannot tell you what an agreeable impression it made upon me, to be thus received, though a perfect stranger, for love and not for money. It is true that in the hotels of Genoa, Naples, and Paris, I have been accustomed to fare very differently; but if there is any thing in the world of which one gets tired, it is the desolate luxuries of an hotel, to which every one contributes his mite. To-day however, I have quitted my little subterraneous chamber, for the French Baron and his lady have left the convent, and I have taken possession of their spacious apartment, which opens upon a terrace. Giorgio is again installed as cook, so that I hope time will not hang heavy upon his hands, and that we shall not give the good monks much extra trouble.

## LETTER XXX.

TO THE COUNTESS SCHÖNBERG-WECKSELBURG.

The Via Dolorosa — Gethsemane — The Mount of Olives —  
Bethany — The Mosque Sakhara.

Jerusalem, November 1st, 1843.

MY dearest Emy, "Via crucis, via lucis," is an ancient proverb which custom has inscribed over the cells of many convents; and truly the path of the cross ever leads to light, which, if not always visible to the world, is certainly manifested within. Christ has trodden the path before us, yet with this difference: the life which he led was a divine life, and his death a cruel and unjust death; while our life is full of sin, and our death its due desert. Of any comparison or similarity of measurement there can, therefore, be no question; yet, if we could not follow him in his path of sorrows, if we could not have fellowship with him, at least in isolated moments of his grief, we should regard him with indifference. The eye gazes around with a cold and inquiring look, till the soul secretly reveals what it in truth sees, and then it appreciates objects as they deserve.

The Via Dolorosa, the way which our Lord trod, bearing his cross from the judgment-hall to Golgotha, we trod to-day. But I am sorry to say we reversed the direction in which Christ was led, for we set out from the church of the Holy Sepulchre, went through the Gate of Judgment, passed the ruins of the old wall

which then encircled the city, to St. Stephen's Gate. All the different places of the passion which have been represented a thousand times, nay, measured out with line and plummet, and memorialised with images and pictures, so that they are well known to Christian Europe, were pointed out to us, with the greatest exactitude.

At the Gate of St. Stephen's, a declivity of Mount Moriah descends perpendicularly to the brook Kidron, and on the other side rises the Mount of Olives, so that it is divided from the city rather by a ravine than a valley. The character of the landscape is everywhere the same; solemn even to severity. The houses, the walls, the piles of rubbish, Mount Moriah, the bed of the Kidron, the Mount of Olives, and even the soil—all is of one and the self-same yellowish grey-stone; not a drop of water flows in the brook Kidron, not a blade of grass enlivens the boulders which, far and wide, cover the heights and the valleys. Only a few scattered olive trees, whose silvery grey foliage is in perfect harmony with the colouring of the landscape, seem to moan amid the graves of the Turks on the declivity of Mount Moriah, and those of the Jews on the Mount of Olives; desolation and the grave seem inscribed on all around: nothing is to be seen but graves, caves, tombs, monuments, and grave-stones. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Thou that stonest the prophets," came to my mind. For the prophets, the woman taken

in adultery; nay, even for the Saviour himself, the Jews had always an odious stone at hand.

A bridge is thrown across the brook Kidron, whence the road leads to a spot where eight primæval olive trees are standing, and which is said to be the Garden of Gethsemene. Here Christ encountered his last conflict. Once in the wilderness, before he entered the battle-field of the world he triumphed over temptation and he who could do this could triumph over fear. It was the same temptation, under different disguises, which was always presented to him, namely, to change his heavenly for an earthly dignity.

Christ might have been an earthly king; his disciples, his hearers, nay, the whole multitude, were ready joyfully to acknowledge him as such; they wanted only a word, a look, and they could not comprehend that it was not to be so; man always desires to draw from spiritual advancement a material benefit, and, blessed with heavenly revelation, he yet wants to build earthly tabernacles. And ah! how often are they annihilated by divine wisdom! Christ with his own hand destroyed his earthly palaces and thrones, and said to Pilate: "I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I might bear witness to the Truth." Here he spoke as God; but in Gethsemene, how mournfully he speaks as man; "Simon, sleepest thou?"

Pardon me, dear friend! I am writing of events

which you can read, in all their fulness, in the words of the four Evangelists ; yet it is impossible not to do so here ! You see the spots of which you have read so often, and you naturally associate the words with them. I have always had peculiar love for the garden of Gethsemene, because Christ was here so completely overcome with grief, and weighed down with anguish, and yet raised himself up again. I looked with interest at the old hoary olive trees, pondering whether they might be the same as those which then stood here. Their mighty trunks are quite hollow, and the cavities filled with stones, to enable them to resist the wind.

I dearly like the olive tree, it is an emblem of love, for it sacrifices itself, it consumes its wood and its marrow, and retains nothing but its bark to impart nourishment to its fruits ; it might be made the symbol of maternal love. It lives to an immense age ; and yet, after all, are eighteen hundred years an immense age ? These trees seem to me like the history of our own times ; they have lived from primæval ages, and, while generations have arisen and passed away, they have undergone no essential change, and nature around them has remained the same. This to me is the main point ; and therefore I must confess, that the minute precision with which the monkish legends assign to every place, some action or word of Christ fatigues me excessively, and fails of making an impression. Here he is said to have



wept over Jerusalem, there to have prayed, while on another spot the disciples are said to have fallen asleep. This is too much ! It may, indeed, have been so, but thought should be permitted to retire within herself, that she may ponder and meditate, and form her own unbiassed conclusions.

We ascended the Mount of Olives, to the spot which is honoured as that of our Lord's Ascension ; it is covered with a plain chapel, surrounded by a large, circular, brick wall, the gates of which are locked and guarded by Turks. An Armenian church, dedicated to St. Pelagia, formerly stood here ; but it has fallen into ruins since the Greeks obtained the upper hand. A small mosque, likewise much dilapidated, stands close to it, and beyond are some miserable dwellings.

We mounted to the top of the minaret, where we had a most splendid prospect over the city, and a panoramic picture of the whole surrounding country. From this point the view of Jerusalem is extremely striking—it rises so royally, so majestically, that I know of no city in the world to compare to it. My astonishment was the greater, because as we had approached the mountain from the west, we at first saw only its flat side.

The mount of Olives is situated due east, and from this place Jerusalem is seen lying on Mount Moriah environed with walls and towers, proudly looking down upon Kidron. The holy city ! Holy for thousands of centuries—to the most diverse religions

and their adherents. To the Israelites it is holy, as the city of the ancient covenant, as the Temple of Jehovah, and as their lost, their ever beloved, and ever-lamented possession, which shall again become their earthly home, and where, in the valley of Jehosophat, the resurrection of the dead will take place. To the Mahometans it is holy in so exalted a degree, that they have no other name for it than *el-Kuhds*, the Holy; for here, upon Mount Moriah, where once stood the temple of Solomon, and now the splendid mosque of Omar or Sakhara, they believe that Mahomet ascended into heaven; that here he will one day judge the dead, and that the dreaded bridge *el Sirat*, the bridge of trial of the clean and unclean, will be stretched not wider than a hair's breadth, across from Mount Moriah to the Mount of Olives, over the defile of Kidron.

To the Christians, Jerusalem is holy, but alas! alas! in about the same manner as the garments of Christ were to the soldiers; each wants to have a part. I assure you I rejoice sincerely that not one of the Protestant churches has the slightest influence here, because thus, from their side at least, no dispute can arise; and I rejoice still more that the Turk is ruler, for were it otherwise, I believe that death, murder, and martyrdom, at all events, persecution and excommunication would inevitably ensue.

Here it is impossible to divest oneself of melancholy. Standing upon this high eminence and

looking around, we behold, in defiance of her former grandeur, the destroyed, desolated, plundered, and humiliated city, which has suffered tribulation such as has befallen none other in the history of the world, and which, whenever it has attempted to rise from its ruins, has always been overthrown afresh.

Opposite lies Golgotha, with truth emanating from the cross, which now as formerly, men care not to understand, because they find it more convenient and more pleasant to lead a life of ease and complacency, than one of struggle and self-denial. Therefore now as then they ask with Pilate: "What is truth?" It is that from the cross. Man must take up the cross and bear it—not coldly and insensibly—not suffering himself to be overwhelmed and crushed—not vaunting himself, nor lamenting under the burden—not regarding it as a chain, but as a file which severs the fetters of his mind and of his soul—not deploring himself as an object of special wrath, nor boasting himself as an object of special mercy. I know not whether men become so confused, or whether are they so by nature, that they are thus slow to apprehend the most simple truths!

Here in the foreground is Moriah, the Mount of Promise, which in general is little thought of because Mount Sion and Golgotha are so close to it; but in which I find something unspeakably touching, because here Abraham, obedient to the command, was ready to offer up his son, his only son—the child of promise! As they were going up towards

the mountain, the son timidly asked "My father, where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" "My son, God will provide himself a lamb;" and God was gracious. He does not always require the sacrifice of our most beloved; not, when like Abraham, we have not made an idol of it: but if we have,—then indeed!—

All we here see, all we call to mind or think upon, is quite overpowering, because it reveals the deepest recesses, the most innate feelings of the soul: because it unfolds in living images the destination and the call of man, and, admonishing and encouraging, knocks at the heart of every child of Adam. Hence I feel myself more closely attracted to these scenes than to any other; but they are so inexpressibly solemn, that the soul may well be sad.

Now, looking beyond the city over the country, I beheld hills piled upon hills, like shattered rocks, irregular rather than sublime, reminding me of destruction, rather than of creation. And these hills are perforated with grottos, which have been converted into sepulchral chambers—an undermined existence. It is not the transitoriness of terrestrial things,—not the fleetness of man's life that moves me, not death; for that releaser and deliverer from untold trials smiles upon me; no! the death's head grins at me in ghastly, unembellished nakedness! In the west extend the mountains of Judea, and their ramifications bound the horizon in the south

towards Hebron, and in the north towards Samaria. All, both far and near partake of the same monotonous hue, as if its head were bestrewed with ashes.

Only in the east towards the valley of Jordan, above clefts in the barren rocks, or rather at their feet, are blue spots and streaks, glistening as though they had fallen from heaven, the Dead Sea; and on its further side, a long far-stretched mountain chain, not striking in its formation, but enlivened by the reflection and the atmosphere of the water stands Mount Pisgah.

Here the eye reposes: here it again beholds that enlivening, that refreshing element, water. It is, indeed, called the Dead Sea, but compared with all that is around it seems a thing of life and motion, and the little spots gleamed like sapphires, so that I could fancy I saw the gentle waves rippling on the sea; and yet it was said to be twenty miles distant, in a direct line. From Nebo, on Mount Pisgah, in the country beyond Jordan, Moses looked towards Canaan with weary, mournful, longing eyes, ready to lie down in the lonely, unknown grave, where his people were not even to pay him the last honours. Other mountains, Moriah and Sion, are devoted to the memory of later generations; where Nebo was, none can tell; but the whole mountain chain appeared to me as a pedestal for the commanding form, beaming for thousands of years with undiminished splendour, of the aged, the mighty Moses, who was

at once, in superhuman proportions, the prophet, the law giver, the historian, and the poet of his people.

We proceeded further along the ridge of the Mount of Olives, and lingered at several spots which afforded a more open and beautiful view of the Dead Sea, and the transjordan mountains; but Jerusalem was no longer seen to the same advantage, and we then descended the declivity to Bethany. The road thither partakes of the cavernous character of the country, and lies through hollows, the sloping sides of which were enlivened here and there with plantations of almonds, figs, and apricot trees, a truly reviving sight! which filled my heart with joy; but it was very transient, for though there are gardens at Bethany, my pleasure vanished on our arrival there, because here again improbabilities were forced upon us.

Among other legendary places of interest, our guide pointed out a building on the top of a rock, which he called *il castello di Lazaro*. Can you possibly fancy Martha, and Mary, and their brother Lazarus, the inmates of a palace! Is it not much more probable that they lived in a small unobtrusive dwelling, where Martha had to use much personal exertion to receive her honoured master with due respect. But this is the way of the world, it always decorates its heroes with some paltry piece of earthly pomp.

With regard to the site of the tomb of Lazarus, I could see no objection: here, where nothing but

tombs are to be seen ; but I am convinced that the people think of all sorts of places which have the remotest possibility of being applicable, and thither they drag the stranger in order to obtain some trifling pecuniary remuneration. Thus it is everywhere ; but here it is annoying to a painful degree. The idlers incessantly tormented us, or rather our Cicerone, to visit the place where Christ mounted the ass on his entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and the Cicerone, true to his trade, of course assured us that it lay in our way. Half the population of Bethany, and all the children accompanied us to a place which was quite in the opposite direction, consequently the most unlikely to be correct ; and here they all called out for a bakshish. I was as much inclined to laugh as to scold. After a short stay at Bethany we returned to Jerusalem, along the foot of the Mount of Olives.

One of the most striking and magnificent buildings of the city, is the great Mosque Omar, or Sakhara, at the back of which is the smaller one of El Aksa, both situated on Mount Moriah, on the site of the ancient temple of Solomon. No Christian is suffered to approach it, not even to cross the threshold of the outer courts ! If he were discovered there, he must either suffer death, or embrace Islamism. The Mahometans attach such a sacred influence to the Sakhara, that they believe that every prayer offered up within its walls will be fulfilled, and they are fearful lest Christians or Jews

might there pray for the possession of Jerusalem; and hence arises their blind jealousy.

We obtained the nearest possible view of the Sakhara, for we saw it from the terrace of the Pacha's house, which joins the outer court area of the mosque. It is far grander than any other mosque, and has all the appearance of a noble and magnificent temple. The area is merely an open space surrounded by the private houses and buildings belonging to the mosque, such as schools, kitchens for the poor, and baths, which open into the bazar and different streets.

The inner court is a quadrangular platform raised twelve or fourteen feet above the area, and is ascended by several beautiful flights of steps, at the top of which are triumphal gates, the arches of which are borne aloft by two, and in some instances by three columns. In the centre of this platform, which is paved with marble, rises the octangular temple from a basement story, and is surmounted by a splendid dome, over which the golden crescent towers in simple grandeur.

The whole edifice seems one mass of lofty, stained-glass windows, which impart a lightness and elegance that I have never seen in any other mosque. A glimmering hue of green, the sacred colour of the prophet's standard, is thrown lightly over the whole building. There are no minarets, nor does the Sakhara require them; in other mosques they are indispensably necessary to compensate for their



want of lightness ; just as is the case with our heavy churches, where the light spire, rising gracefully aloft, indicates beautifully the soaring and aspiring of man's thoughts to Heaven. But the entire building of the Sakhara rises above the earth with such freedom and lightness that it needs no minarets. Whether seen close by from the terrace, or at a distance, from the Mount of Olives, it looks equally beautiful and noble, and incomparably surpasses any other building I have ever seen.

The Crusaders erected a church on Mount Moriah, where the Caliph Omar had before built a mosque, which the sultan Saladin afterwards caused to be restored. Perhaps the aged Omar, as leader of the victorious Arabs, thought nothing equal to his tent, for the mosque looks just like a tent,—like the tent of a triumphant king. But so far as I know, the Sakhara cannot boast of a regular style of architecture.

## LETTER XXXI.

TO MY SISTER.

Jerusalem and the Jews—Enlargement of the City—The Cœnaculum—Dwellings of the Lepers—The Jews' Palace of Wailing—Site of the Holy Sepulchre—Stillness of the Night.

Jerusalem, Nov. 5, 1843.

“GET thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.” With these majestic words commences the history of the children of Israel. All the other descendants of Noah were scattered over the world, and whether God spoke to them or not, we know not; for we have no revelation upon the subject.

But the Israelites were distinguished by having a revelation, and they have never forgotten that God was their leader. They were a stiff-necked, arrogant and obstinate people, and though, alas! this distinction did not restrain them from wandering after false gods, it always led them back to the worship of Jehovah, and enabled them to endure the greatest affliction with astonishing patience. The words I have quoted, dearest Clara, summoned Abraham, who, with his Father Terah had come to Haran, from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan. Abraham dwelt in Sichem, and afterwards removed his tent to the plains of Mamre, in Hebron.

The ancient Patriarchal mode of life as described in the Bible, may be most readily conceived in this country. The habits of the people are so simple and their wants so few, that they journey on exactly in the same way, and up to the same point, to which their fathers journeyed ; so that the lapse of time has had but little influence upon them. A mighty impulse which suddenly throws man off the ancient course, usually prepares his independent development. I do not believe that man thereby becomes better and happier ; for, what he gains in intelligence, he loses in energy ; but it is certain that mankind thus acquires manifold improvements, and this is undoubtedly an advance towards something better. This appears to me to be the destination of the western world, which does homage to the principle of movement, and, perhaps, because through violent convulsive movements from east to west,—such as the emigration of nations, the introduction of christianity, the influence of the Arabs, the combats with the Turks—it has received the impulses which it needed, and by which it has been trained.

The Oriental is more faithful to the principle of stability. He may perhaps sometimes take a leap, he may for awhile arouse himself for action, and then he performs something extraordinary ; but he soon relaxes and settles down at nearly the same point at which he started. It is true that the development of the Arabs proceeded for some centuries ; but we must remember that it was only in a country of the

West, in Spain and its immediate neighbourhood, and in contact with the Goths, the noblest race of the West.

In the whole of the East it was brilliant and transitory as a rocket, which soars to heaven and falls dead and extinguished to the earth. The cause of this, it is not easy to divine. Is it Christianity? This can scarcely be affirmed, for eastern nations, the Syrians and the Egyptians were Christians, and are partly so to this day, without having ever ventured one step into the region which we call that of movement, of progress, and of development.

The Orientals strictly adhere to their old habits, like the Israelites, the Turks, and above all the Chinese; each perseveres in his own way. Thus the meeting of Abraham's servant with Rebecca at the well, is a scene that may be witnessed here every evening; camels reposing at the well without the town, the women with their pitchers upon their shoulders, letting them down and giving the men a drink of water, while they are conversing with them; the silver armlets too, which they wear, the different implements of primitive simplicity, the form of the amphora, the lamps, the club-like shepherd's crooks, the slings with which the children play, and with which David slew Goliath, the pits in the field where his brethren let down Joseph, the caves in which the hunted David and the prophets of later times took refuge, and where even now the shepherds take shelter in stormy weather; all this you find precisely

as described in the Scriptures, thousands of years ago, while we, in Europe, have but a very indistinct representation of what concerned our forefathers as many centuries ago.

Their nomadic life led forth many of the generations of Israel, when brethren and relations parted, and the one settled here and the other there. The departure of the children of Israel into Egypt is connected with this and it was not till four hundred and seventy years after, that they returned to Canaan under Joshua, and in many wars and engagements had conquered the lands from their heathen possessors, that each of the twelve tribes obtained his own appointed inheritance by lot.

During the first centuries they were not under a secular chief, properly so called, but under judges, men raised up by God when even the people were threatened by danger, and through whose instrumentality they were saved. The mighty Gideon, the unhappy Jephtha, who sacrificed his daughter for a victory, the powerful Samson, and the heroic Deborah, a mother in Israel, were judges, whom the people obeyed and followed so long only, however, as they felt that they had need of them ; for they were always a stiff-necked generation. Through a period of four hundred and fifty years they gradually advanced to that point at which nations, consolidated at home, acquire power and consideration abroad, and this under the constant guidance of their temporal leaders.

But among the Israelites this guidance was always

subject to the control of the Divine power, for in fact Jehovah was their king, who spoke to them through his inspired prophets. But Israel undervalued the privilege of a Theocracy, and Samuel, the last of the judges, was therefore permitted to anoint Saul as their king, and of his successors David and Solomon, it is difficult to say whether they filled the kingly or the priestly office with the greatest dignity: but with the reign of Rehoboam, came divisions which led to the separation of the twelve tribes, and the disruption of the kingdom of Israel from that of Judah. Their speedy apostacy from God led to internal weakness and dissension; and calamities, and denunciations by the prophets, and great, and terrible judgments from Jehovah, fell as a consequence upon the rebellious people.

Senecherib, king of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem, and would have destroyed it had not king Hezekiah and Isaiah, the prophet cried mightily unto the Lord, and the suspended cloud was for this time withheld from discharging itself over Jerusalem. But it fell with twofold severity in the year 588, B.C. when the kings and their people refused to hearken to the voice of Jeremiah, and continued to follow after the abominations of the heathens, till the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed Jerusalem to its very foundation, and carried away captive king Zedekiah and the remnant of the people of Judah to Babylon. There they

remained seventy years, till the Persians conquered the ancient kingdom of the Chaldeans, and Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, but retained a species of supremacy over them.

Under Nehemiah, one of the last prophets of the Old Testament, they returned home and rebuilt the city and temple from their foundations. But their liberty had vanished; they followed, as a dependent member, the fortunes of the world, and fell into the hands of those who governed it. Alexander extended his sceptre over them, and his successors, the Ptolomies, and the ambitious Selucidæ, one of whom, Antiochus Epiphanes, conquered and desolated Jerusalem, put down the ancient worship of Jehovah, and instituted in its place that of the heathen divinities, 175 B.C. The Asmoneans, the Priest Mattahias and his five sons withstood him, animated the people to battle, and reconquered Jerusalem 171 B.C. mainly by the patriotic heroism of one of the sons, named Judas, who was surnamed Maccabeus, the conqueror in the Lord, and his whole family was so called after him. They governed the liberated country as royal priests, but the decline of nations and states, as well as that of individuals never arises from external causes; if they are inwardly unsound, it needs but a slight shock, and they fall to pieces.

In the year B.C. 69, Hyrcanus and his brother Aristobulus fell out together; and the weak-minded Hyrcanus fled for protection to Rome

when the republic was at its last gasp, and endeavoured to conceal its decline by trophies of victory. Pompey embraced the cause of Hyrcanus, and returned with him to Palestine, subjected to the Romans, B. C. 64, and left Hyrcanus under the rule of Antipater, to govern with the semblance of royalty. Herod, the son of Antipater, was surnamed the Great, like many other rulers to whom the title of the Violent would have better applied.

By means of bribery and subtilty, Herod prevailed upon Antony and Octavius to make him king of Judea, B.C. 40. He was avaricious and fond of splendour, a servant to the Romans, a monster in his own house, and the tyrant of his people. He caused his brother-in-law to be put death—yea, his own sons, and even his wife, the last remaining member of the Asmonian family, the incomparably beautiful, and high-minded Miriamne.

About a year before his awful death, our blessed Lord was born, and Herod added to his many other sins, that of the murder of the Innocents at Bethlehem. His sons, Herod Antipas, and Philip, divided the land, while the Romans continued to have a Procurator in Judea, in order that this refractory people might not manifest a spirit of resistance, or make any attempt to return to their former position. Herod Antipas caused John the Baptist to be beheaded, on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and Pilate the Procurator gave commandment that Christ should be crucified. The Jews



turned a deaf ear to their Prophets, and would not receive their message because they expected a temporal Messiah. Nothing more was to be done for them. They were oppressed under two kings, Herod Agrippa I., and Agrippa II., together with whom the Roman Governors Felix and Festus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, contributed to reduce them to the deepest misery.

For the space of sixty-six years after the birth of Christ, the Jewish nation bore the Roman yoke, when the Syrians, moved with envy, bribed Gessius Florus, the governor, to deprive the Jews of their rights as Roman citizens which led to the breaking out of an insurrection with all its attendant horrors of party dissension, murder, fire, and desolation.

Vespasian, who was at that time commander-in-chief of the Roman forces, proceeded against Palestine, and took Josephus, one of the Jewish ring-leaders, prisoner, and as he was compelled to remain with the Roman army, he was subsequently an eyewitness of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, of which, together with the previous afflictions of that devoted city, he afterwards wrote his well-known, energetic history. Vespasian being raised to the Imperial dignity, his son Titus came in his stead and besieged Jerusalem, which was lacerated by internal dissensions, famine and sickness, from the 14th of April to the 1st of July, A.D. 71, when it fell into his hands, and not one stone was left upon another. During the siege not less than 1,100,000

Jews perished in Jerusalem, 97,000 were led away captives, and 30 were sold for one denarius ! Palestine was subjugated, and constituted a Roman province, which upon the division of the Empire, A.D. 395, fell to the Byzantine Emperors.

Constantine and his mother, the Empress Helena, invested Jerusalem with a glory, in which the Jews neither had nor cared for a portion ; they wandered in voluntary and compulsory exile, dispersed throughout the world. But Jerusalem had not yet reached the close of her suffering ; she was to raise herself repeatedly from the dust, always to be humiliated anew. The Emperor Justinian, transferred to it a patriarchate, A.D. 553, and Jerusalem was now one of the places where the highest dignity of the Christian Church seemed to be established, chiefly for the purpose of exercising a species of inquisition. The fruitful dissensions between the Orthodox and the Heretics, who sometimes combated, not only with bitter words, but with clubs and fists, and which always led to the subjugation of one of the parties, were not silenced till the flaming sword of Islamism extended itself over the East.

After a siege of four months Omar conquered Jerusalem, in 636, and was afterwards murdered there. The reciprocal oppressions of the Christians was now visited upon them all, without exception, by the iron yoke of the Mahometans ; as if Providence intended to teach them, by melancholy, personal experience, the unspeakable odiousness of persecutions

and religious intolerance. Whenever the dynasty of the caliphs passed into another family, their rulers in Jerusalem changed with them, and this was always accompanied by the whole train of miseries and oppression peculiar to civil wars, which fell with great severity upon the people.

The Egyptian Fatimas, in the year 1098, had taken Jerusalem from the conquering Seleucidæ who had held it in possession fourteen years, when the crusades against Islamism began to be agitated. The Christians of the West stood up as one man for the deliverance of their heavily oppressed brethren in the East, and for the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Infidels.

That enthusiastic minds fanaticise the multitude, that the ambitious abuse them while they are in a state of excitement, that great minds in isolated moments inspire the vacillating chaotic masses with their spirit, and thus carry them along with them to the goal ; that the selfish fling them back to a still greater distance from it than they were : these are every day events, and the crusades have never appeared remarkable to me, because this was precisely the case with them ; but that they should have constituted the spirit of the age for a century and a half is very striking.

By the spirit of the age, I mean that idea which pervades an epoch, and likewise the atmosphere in which mankind live in this epoch ; for material and social circumstances act so essentially upon it, that

they gradually prepare the idea which ripens, expands, and makes way for itself. The masses are never penetrated with an idea as with a flash of lightning; whoever maintains this, means only to flatter them, by representing them as inspired; or he deceives himself. The spirit of the age passes through a regular course of development from the cradle, through manhood to the grave.

In France, for instance, the last century, through a succession of social conditions, words, and writings, reared the revolutionary spirit of the age, till it became a youth, whose mighty energies, when arrived at manhood, called forth the first days of the revolution, and who is now expiring in the idiotcy of age. Do you understand, dear Clara, what I mean by the spirit of the age?

I now devote much time to the study of the Bible, and find in it numerous subjects of deep interest, which I had never observed before; among others a passage in the second chapter of Genesis, where God brings every living creature unto Adam to see what he would call them; and we are told that whatever was the name or character thereof, that Adam called every living creature. This talent of naming every thing according to its true character, instead of being gradually perfected through our enlarged knowledge, is now almost totally lost. A Babel confusion of tongues prevails. Nothing is named according to its true nature; hence one person cannot comprehend the appella-

tion given by another, or he misunderstands it, and consequently arises such a fearful playing with words that ideas suffer by it.

Ask a philosopher to explain to you what he means by a glass of water, and his answer will sound as if it were the ocean. This makes me so tenacious of the explicitness of my expressions, and I endeavour to explain them from their innate properties when they seem to be deficient in perspicuity, or when there is danger that the words might be taken for an indefinite or vulgar expression. I am anxious that no doubt may exist that things of which I speak are, in my estimation, such as I call them; to this you may indeed object, "but in my estimation they are different." Very well, dear Clara, from this answer I see that you have understood my meaning, and thus my object is gained.

The idea of the Crusades originated in the eleventh century, from the melancholy relations of the returning pilgrims, and from the complaints and petitions for aid and protection, which the Oriental christians, as far as lay in their power, sent to those in the West, and chiefly to the Pope at Rome. The human race had still the faults and the advantages of youth; it was full of strong passions and thirst of action; two tendencies which powerfully contributed to form the faith, as it was designated by the church.

The desire of action suffered no speculations to arise; the passions opened an abyss of imperfec-

tions, or rather of vices, such as injustice, violence, cruelty, and unresisting obedience to the impulse of the moment, which manifested themselves in anger, lust, and intoxication, into which man recklessly plunged, and then blindly hoped to atone for his crimes by corporeal sufferings, by penance in person and property, and thus vainly endeavoured to make his peace with heaven.

Even faith participated in the gross spirit of the age. No enthusiasm was felt for the spirit of Christ, such as he inculcated in his doctrine; that age did not believe in the eternal redemption from sin and spiritual bondage, which our Lord promises to those who abide in Him; but its faith was carnal, and it rested altogether in a corporeal tangible sense—in Christ's body, Christ's blood, Christ's wounds, as the procuring cause of redemption. Hence the men of that age wept over his sufferings; hence they extolled his death above his life and doctrine; hence all eyes were turned with grief and indignation to the holy sepulchre, sacrilegiously profaned by the infidels; and hence when, in the latter part of the century, a cry arose, "deliver it," the sound was re-echoed throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

On the 15th of July 1099 the crusaders, under the command of many princes and nobles, with Godfrey of Bouillon at their head, conquered Jerusalem. The kingdom of the Latins was at once founded, with great pomp and magnificence, and for

the defence, enlargement, security, and ultimately for its reconquest, one crusade after another was made to the Holy Land.

The imperiousness of the popes, the ambition of the princes, the chivalry of the knights; the rapacity of adventurers; the variety of conflicting, and yet congenial interests, and the mass of weaknesses and energies, which could find no employment in Europe, all these cherished the spirit of the crusades, while they again excited interest by their successes, and sympathy by their failures. Yet something inexplicable is attached to the crusades; the magic influence which they had upon women and children.

Though we might account for it in the former by the ardour of their enthusiasm, their yearning affections, and deep consciousness of sin, yet the same reason will not apply to the children, who knew nothing of the pleasures or pains of life, but who nevertheless formed a distinct body, which did not unite with any other, undertook the pilgrimage alone, and of course perished on the way.

All this did not avail the Latin kingdom; it decayed, as a tree which is planted at the wrong season in an uncongenial soil. The numerous petty principalities, counties, and lordships which the crusaders founded on the same footing as those in Europe, were directly opposed to that unity which existing circumstances imperatively demanded. The Mahometans with their immense armies, and under the sway of despotic sovereigns, who tolerated

neither objections nor interference from those around them, had in fact an easy game to play.

After Jerusalem had been conquered by Saladin, it twice fell into the hands of the Latins, but though the Emperor Frederick II. was crowned in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, the regal dignity of Jerusalem was only a title which yielded its wearer more reproach than honour.

From the year 1244 the city, and from 1291 all Syria and Palestine belonged to the Egyptian sultans, and Jerusalem lay prostrate in sackcloth and ashes. But no earthly power was to arise, no great and mighty ruler was to follow his career of conquest, without laying his hand upon the devoted city. The Ottomans, in the full splendour of their victories, turned from the Danube to the Nile, and Jerusalem with Syria and Egypt fell into the possession of Sultan Selim I. Since that time it has not suffered any siege, for Napoleon remained on the coast of Syria.

Jerusalem has all the appearance of a fortress; the walls and gates, built by Sultan Soliman the Magnificent, in 1534, in a manner suitable to the wants and extent of the city, are still standing. They are in much better preservation than those of Damascus and Constantinople, and indeed of the public buildings in general. Yet Jerusalem, in comparison with those cities, is a small place; it is said to have at most 20,000 inhabitants; but this cannot be known with any degree of certainty,



because the census of the population is made as carelessly as possible throughout the whole of the Turkish empire, on account of the levying of recruits.

The inhabitants state their number lower than it really is, while the government on the contrary estimates it higher. Here in Jerusalem, where there are so many Christians, this reason does not of course obtain to the same extent; but nobody cares about the exact amount of the population. It is stated indeed in round numbers at one thousand Roman Catholics, three thousand Greeks, four thousand Armenians, as many Jews, and eight thousand Mahometans; perhaps the relative proportion is pretty nearly correct, though the numbers may differ.

The extent of the city is calculated for a greater number of inhabitants—for whole tracts are covered with heaps of rubbish, while others are deserted, and the walls and cisterns ruined and broken. There are some places which find no counterpart in the world—and such are the dwellings of the lepers. Close to David's gate, within the wall, there are a number of huts resembling dog-kennels—not only in appearance, but in discomfort, these are their homes. Here these miserable beings live shut out from the world, and have communion with none but objects like themselves, for they are avoided and repulsed by all others; they subsist by charity and begging, in a condition which might be called

brutish, if it were not a thousand times more lamentable. There they live, and yet they do not feel themselves too wretched to give birth to unfortunate beings who are born to a similar miserable fate. Sometimes the deplorable disorder accords to them a healthy childhood and does not manifest itself till the age of adolescence ; but, in such society and with such a prospect what avails the health of the child ?

By the side of the Zakhara mosque nearest the city, is a long passage paved with hewn stone. This passage lies between high walls, in one of which there are enormous blocks, bevelled round the edges in the Roman style and are therefore, probably, of the time of Adrian, who caused many buildings to be created in Jerusalem. This is the Jew's place of wailing, and hither, on Mount Moriah, near the site of Solomon's temple, the Jews resort every Tuesday to bewail and lament, in mournful songs, the fall of Jerusalem, and their own unhappy fate ; a permission which they were obliged to purchase from the caliph Omar. Here they sit, as their forefathers sat some thousand years ago by the waters of Babylon, with the same sufferings and the same feelings, longing for the fulfilment of the divine promises, and yet incapable of comprehending them when they draw near their fulfilment.

In the vicinity of David's gate, close to a mosque which was formerly a Latin convent, is the cœnaculum, the interior of which is a large chamber divided by two heavy pillars into three portions.

Here it is said that Christ instituted the Lord's supper, and that the Holy Ghost subsequently descended upon the assembled disciples. This apartment does not appear to belong either to the times of the Saracens, or to the middle ages, but it is unquestionably not so ancient as the days of Christ. While, however, I am inclined to question the authenticity of the coenaculum, I am convinced, notwithstanding Robinson's objections, that what is called the Holy Sepulchre really is so. I have several times visited the church, and have now gone round the city walls, and I am more and more confirmed in my opinion.

This, as you are doubtless aware, dearest Clara, has been a much disputed point; and in order to decide it satisfactorily, it is necessary to ascertain with precision the direction of the city walls during the time of Christ. They certainly did not then run as they do now; but the question is, whether they ran in such a direction as to enclose the present sepulchre and Golgotha, or not. Those who dispute the genuineness of these sites, bring forward arguments to prove that the ancient walls enclosed the spot on which the Holy Sepulchre stands, and if that were so, the real Golgotha and the real tomb must be looked for somewhere else. Robinson, who is the most diligent explorer, has however not the smallest notion where they are to be sought for.

Those who maintain their genuineness have of course arguments in support of their opinion; for

instance: that the whole corner of the city to the left of the entrance of the Jaffa gate, where there is now a piece of waste ground with an empty reservoir, and further on, the Latin, Coptic, and Greek convents, and the church of the Holy Sepulchre, might very well have been beyond the walls in the time of Christ, without in the smallest degree militating against an historical fact; and this is the conclusion at which I also have arrived after looking at these points from the terrace of our convent.

None of the plans of the city are quite accurate, and they all differ essentially from one another, especially at this corner; one of them cuts it off so smoothly, that an unprejudiced person would say, that it must always have been a part of the city; while another extends it so far, that an impartial eye must declare it to be an addition of a later age.

I lay the most stress on the ancient tradition. You think perhaps that this ought also to be mistrusted, because the names given to so many of these *loca sancta* are evidently quite arbitrary; for instance, the above-mentioned reservoir at the Jaffa gate called the pool of Bethesda; but the church of the Holy Sepulchre has its documents, namely the Chapel of the Empress Helena, which is mentioned by contemporary authors. At the time of the Crusades, when every spot of this ground was considered holy, when imagination was so vehemently excited, that in the spirit of the age it found ineffable enjoyment in

contemplating and touching the spots hallowed by the presence of Christ, many names were doubtless arbitrarily given—not to deceive, not even with any particular view, but in the same undesigning manner of which our own times furnish abundant similar instances, “where may such and such an event have happened? Was it there?—Yes, perhaps there—very probably there—certainly there.” The last solution, as the most satisfactory, is reiterated, is everywhere welcomed, and its authenticity is in a very short time not questioned by any one.

Thus, my dear Clara, I have stated, and I think very convincingly, my conviction respecting the identity of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, my mistrust in regard to the pool of Bethesda and my doubts about the *cœnaculum*. But after all it is a fruitless labour, and the whole dispute about these subjects, which cannot be decided, is unsatisfying and unedifying.

As you are probably quite ignorant of the whole, it will appear doubly tedious to you, and I must ask your pardon for having engaged in this discussion, and quite rejoice that I can, with a good conscience, abide by the old tradition. Now, good night! Every eye in Jerusalem has probably been closed for the last two hours, except the untiring watchmen and devotees, who keep their vigils at the Holy Sepulchre. Such a profound silence now prevails around me, that the ticking of my little watch seems to be very loud. Now and then I hear the howling of a dog; but every trace of human life and activity

is dead ; not a sound, not a footfall, is to be heard in this extensive building. It has the semblance of a prison.

This you will say is no pleasing picture of my Casa Nova ; but, nevertheless, it is a safe, peaceful resort for honest pilgrims. If, however, you could take a peep into my apartment and see the thick walls and ponderous door, blackened by time, the strong iron grating before the narrow window, the vaulted ceiling, and the long, dark, clumsy table in the middle of the room, at one end of which I am seated with the pen in my hand and writing to you by the light of a three beaked brass oil-lamp, and above all, experience the feeling caused by the solemn stillness, the comparison of a prison would at once occur to yourself.

The style in which the houses are built favours this seclusion, for no sound can penetrate through the thick walls and the vaulted ceilings, which are very general here. Besides, each house is a small cube, divided into two spaces, one level with the surface of the ground or a little below it, the second up one pair of stairs. This stair case is always built on the outside of the cube, which is covered with a low dome, as a protection against the rain, though in many instances this shelter is wanting. Roofs which require wood in their construction cannot be applied here, because there is no timber whatever for building, and therefore the rooms are always vaulted.

In what a confused medley these houses are

thrown and jumbled together, what little stair-cases doors, gates, court yards, terraces, passages, on a very small scale, compose my Casa Nova, you could not clearly understand unless you were to accompany me to-morrow morning and take a survey from our highest terrace. Good night!

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LETTER XXXII.

TO MY SISTER.

Cave of Jeremiah—Tomb of Simon the Just—Tombs of the Kings and Judges—Tombs of Jacob, Zachariah and Absalom—Tomb of the Virgin Mary.

Jerusalem, November 6th. 1843.

My dearest Clara,

I concluded my letter to you yesterday, under the influence of those feelings, which the solemn stillness of midnight inspires. Indeed, I generally choose the evening hour for writing, yet I must add to-day, that my chamber does not always look like a prison, and that we live most cheerfully in the Casa Nova, in spite of the grated window and the black door.

The Prussian Consul breakfasts with us at eleven o'clock every morning, and the whole afternoon is dedicated to making excursions and promenades. He is a very agreeable man, as learned as if he had spent his whole life in the library, and yet as pleasant and sensible, as if he had never pored over

books. When science is no longer the dry learning of the scholar, but has been so completely mastered, that it results in active, practical knowledge, then I greatly admire it.

Prussia, which does so much for education, ought to take decisive measures, to induce her learned men to pass a few years at Paris, there to brush away some of the dust of the German schools, and to get rid of the pedantic expressions, views, and manners, which the tendency of their education naturally gives them. The animated, cheerful, varied life of Paris, is just the remedy they want, and there, as well as in London, the Consul studied for five years. Here at Jerusalem, at Beyrout, and in Alexandria, the Prussian Consul is placed diplomatically in a totally different sphere of action from that of consuls, whose functions are purely commercial; hence, it is requisite that their education should be essentially different; and I derive great advantage from it.

The social intercourse of life is very ill provided for here. Indeed, you are cut off from the world to such a degree, that the seaport and mercantile town of Beyrout looks comparatively European, for Jerusalem has so irregular and uncertain a postal arrangement, that you are never sure either of letters or newspapers. You have no books or libraries to fall back upon, but are thrown upon your own resources, and forced to feed upon your own reflec-



tions and observations ; for the other means which society usually affords are equally scanty.

The Anglican bishop, and the ministers of the American Mission are devoted to their families and their own peculiar spheres of duty, which have indeed large claims upon them ; besides these, there are the British and the French Consuls, the latter of whom has not long been here, and two physicians, and this constitutes the society of Jerusalem. Hence, those who live in this melancholy place, over subterranean caves and sepulchres, amid graves and mounds of rubbish had need be endowed with a double share of the happy pliability of human nature to enable them to conform to this circumscribed state of things, while, at the same time, it is equally indispensable that they should retain sufficient energy of character to enable them to find some scope for the play of their mental faculties.

I could not help telling the Consul sportively, that he must take great care, lest in this stony place he also become petrified ; for in truth the extreme seclusion here is but too favourable to it, and conduces to shut up views and opinions within the mind that gave them birth, because there is nothing from without to elicit, enlarge, or modify them. Life is very remarkable here in this respect. I can easily understand that the Israelite should come from Europe to *die* at Jerusalem ; but to *live* here, for any length of time, would be next to impossible.

We have to-day visited the valley of Jehoshaphat, and the heights of the north of Jerusalem which contain such a multitude of sepulchral caves, as it is scarcely possible to conceive should exist in the neighbourhood of a city. They are partly tombs excavated in the solid rocks, on both sides of the valley, and partly ancient quarries which have been converted into tombs. Of the latter description are the ruined tomb of Simon the Just, which presents a very picturesque appearance, and the Grotto where the Prophet Jeremiah wrote his touching lamentations over Jerusalem. They are destitute of all ornament, like any other stone quarry to which the hand of man has only added what was requisite to fit it for future use.

The tombs of the kings, which lie to the north of the city are finer, and the portico of the half subterranean area, which is about ninety feet square, is of a singularly mixed architecture, and richly ornamented with triglyphs and acanthus. From this area a flight of stairs leads into an ante-chamber, which is quite under ground, and pitch dark; this is the passage to what are properly speaking the tombs of the kings. Opposite to the entrance there are two chambers, each of which contains six low, deep niches, or crypts cut into the solid rock, and in these the sarcophagi were placed. To the right there is another doorway which leads into three smaller chambers; these are excavated on a different plan, and are so constructed that there is

on either side of the door a bank or ledge hewn out of the rock, upon which those corpses, which were merely wrapped up in grave clothes, used to be laid.

The Holy Sepulchre was originally on this plan, and I can now exactly fancy what part of the rock must have been removed to give it its present form, namely, the whole of the exterior of the rock, so that the little chamber, together with its ante-chamber were completely excavated, with the ledge of rock to the right of the door; the whole of the interior being now cased with marble, and the entrance left as low and narrow as it was when in the possession of Joseph of Arimathea. I was much interested in the tombs of the kings; not only because they are the largest, and best built, but because they explained to me the actual formation of the Holy Sepulchre.

Nothing is known of the kings or other individuals who were interred in these tombs, intended to be their last resting place, though alas! they were not destined to be such; all the tombs have been disturbed, devastated, and plundered. Large fragments of the richly sculptured sarcophagi lie scattered upon the ground, mingled with the bones of those who once tenanted them, and shattered masses of the stone doors and dilapidated steps leading into still lower chambers prove that their destruction was wanton.

The tombs of the judges, to the north of those of the kings afford the antiquarian much matter for

investigation, as they are unquestionably not those of the ancient judges who flourished in the early history of the Jewish nation. There are four doors leading into the ante-chamber, but the whole is devoid of ornament, and it is probably only because there are a great many sepulchral chambers that a name has been given them by which attention has been drawn to them.

The whole of this district, which extends a distance of more than a league on the north of the city from the Damascusgate to the Jaffa or Bethlehemgate is covered with tombs which have no particular designation. In some spots olive trees are planted ; but generally speaking it is a wilderness of stones. The ground is a high level which undulates here and there, and in the declivities of such undulations are the entrances to the sepulchral chambers. The greater number are half in ruins and some entirely so, and are for the most part closed ; for the Arabs are terribly afraid of ghosts, and as soon as they have ascertained that there are no more treasures in these caves, they are seized with panic, lest an angry spirit should have its abode there and make its appearance, and they therefore pile a heap of stones before the opening.

Our little graves in the small church yards, nay even family vaults, not excepting those of emperors and kings, look mean in comparison with these large, firm, durable sepulchres. Their inhabitants are dead—their skeletons have disappeared—their names no longer resound, and the only remem-

brance of the spirit which animated them thousands of years since — is their grave. But is it wise to impress the grave with such a stamp of eternity? Among the Israelites it is! because they believe in the personal resurrection of the dead at the judgment of the world, therefore their graves must endure to the last day, that they may protect the bones committed to them. They are therefore constructed in the rock, where the necessary durability might be pre-supposed, and yet they have not attained their object.

On the declivity of the Mount of Offence, so called, because Solomon here sacrificed to the false gods, opposite Mount Moriah, and separated from it by the brook Kidron and the valley of Jehoshaphat, are very singular graves, wrought out of the solid rock into little temples, ornamented with pillars and rich tasteful friezes, which are called the tombs of Zachariah, Jacob and Absalom. I am heartily tired of all these names, for they do not help you to arrive at any conclusion, because they are not correctly designated; yet, nevertheless, I must repeat them to you, because they denominate things which in themselves are extremely interesting. Such a Necropolis is something quite new to me. I think the Jews brought remembrances from Egypt with them to Palestine, for there the rocks are said to be perforated with tombs as a bee-hive is with cells.

It must be confessed that the solemnity with which Jerusalem is invested, is strangely heightened

by the fact that, wherever the eye turns, wherever the fool treads, it falls upon a grave. Life has become the booty of death ; he ravishes, he thrives, he everywhere sets up his dominion, he spreads his immense winding sheet from mountain to mountain, from valley to valley.

I had almost forgotten to mention the tomb of the Virgin Mary which lies on the left hand, on the road from St. Stephen's gate to Gethsemane, under a little Greek church. Properly speaking, however, it does not belong to the tombs of which I have just been speaking, for the pilgrims do not care about these ; they attract only the curious and the travellers, while the tomb of the Virgin is naturally a chief place of pilgrimage. But it just struck me that in this country, where a religious creed makes as inexorable a separation in life as in death, this grave has been invested with peculiar honor, for here the different religious persuasions have made peace ! Even the Mahometans possess a small place of devotion in this chapel.

In this land of tombs, kings and sages, the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles and evangelists of the New ; the Latin kings, princes and judges ; thousands of crusaders, and thousand, thousand nameless ones who flourished from the remotest ages, since the time that David built his palace on Mount Sion, and throughout the sway of the long race of the sons of Mahomet, now rest, all amicably in the cold bosom of the earth till the morning

of the resurrection. What a tide of events is associated with those who once sojourned here; and if one of them were to come again, yea, if Christ were now to re-visit this spot, would he be content with what had been made of his own work; would he recognise it?

Where is his spirit of freedom and of peace? The world lies bound in fetters, in the thralldom of hypocrisy, and hence in discord and confusion; it is at enmity with itself, and wants to throw the blame upon another. It pants after a spiritual resurrection, and cannot find the form with which to re-invest the being, for all it conjures up is choked by gross materialism, or expires in a lie.

The illusion of freedom—is not true! The illusion of the church—is not true! The illusion of society—is not true! Not true, because they are all hollow. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, until now, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. However, God has governed the world so long, and will continue to do so; but he who on this spot asks “What have eighteen centuries made of our world?” and replies complacently, “Something very good,” does not honestly mean what he says. In the sight of the grave we think of resurrection; and here the renovation of our world is forcibly impressed upon my mind! But, alas! it must first pass through dust and corruption.

You know, dearest Clara, it is my failing to grieve and despond at every thing; therefore do not take

what I say in too serious a light ; but I believe that this is the reason why I delight so much in the prophets : I will contemplate these millions of graves, and exclaim with Jeremiah, “ Israel goeth to his rest.” This rest will also be ours. Why then should we despond ?

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### LETTER XXXIII.

TO MY BROTHER.

Dissensions between religious sects—The Fathers of the Latin Convent—Wurtemberg peasants—Valleys around the city.

Jerusalem, Nov. 7th, 1843.

My dear brother ! The Turkish government does not exercise a wholesome influence, wherever its sway may be extended ; probably, however, the Mahometan is accustomed to it, and solaces himself with the personal freedom which he enjoys in his own house, and in his family. He lives in ease and comfort, has as many wives as he may desire, slaves in abundance, whom he treats well, children whom he also considers as his chattels, pipes, coffee, and baths in superfluity ; and what can he want more ? If the pachalic happens to be governed by a man who is not of a very cruel or covetous disposition, his life is free from care, and his only wish is that his children may inherit the like.

Doubtless there are many men even among us with very similar dispositions, men who sit in clover



and fold their hands perfectly contented with their mere animal existence, and unconcerned about the rest of the world. These are far more stupid than the Mussulmans, for they are surrounded by all the struggles of the mind, by all the incitements of the passions, by all the importunities of the imagination and intellect, which education and civilization have so powerfully awakened among us; and yet they perceive it not! while the Mussulman comes in contact only with men, who think and feel as he does, that is, with men whose faculties lie dormant, and whose feelings are concentrated upon objects of sense. That restless activity which has gained such a dizzy height among us, that the sight becomes dazzled, has no existence here. Trade, agriculture, manufactures and mechanics, are carried on only for home consumption, and in the same manner as from time immemorial.

Ibrahim Pacha was the first who, after a lapse of centuries, endeavoured to introduce in some instances, a better state of things; for example, as there is but little water in Jerusalem, and its vicinity, and there are consequently no water-mills, the stones which grind the corn are turned by horses, while the peasantry use the hand-mills, as was the custom in remote ages. Ibrahim Pacha accordingly built two windmills, by which the corn would of course be more quickly, and at the same time more perfectly ground; and I have no doubt, that he commanded that they should be made use of. Since he left

Syria, these mills have been perfectly useless; there they stand, near the Jaffa gate, like a couple of uncouth, ruined towers, while the horses and women grind the corn as formerly.

You will perhaps say that it is evident they did not see the necessity of a change, and consequently that there was no need to make any alteration; let me however, remind you of your own people at Neuhaus, how they entreated you not to put those horrid chimneys upon the new houses, but to retain the old method, by which the smoke not only found vent at pleasure, but at the same time cured the sausages and hams, in so accessible a region that they had merely to stretch out their hand and take them down. What child would learn to read if his master did not exercise authority and firmness?

But stay:—till I come to Egypt I will not say a word more about Ibrahim Pacha. I shall then be able to take a general view of the government of Ali Pacha, which is the exact counterpart of the sway which Ibrahim exercised in Syria. What I in fact intended to say when I set out was, that the Turkish government exercises a most baneful influence upon the Christians who reside here. Every thing may be purchased at Constantinople, and the Turks demand money for all, even if it does not in the least concern them.

The Christians here are chiefly interested about matters connected with religion, and for the most part about its externals. A firman must be pro-

cured, or rather it must be purchased, even if it should be in diplomatic form, at Constantinople for everything : whether a new altar is to be placed in such a spot, whether the church-door may be removed to such another place, or whether the key to some sanctuary shall belong to such or such a sect ; all must be sought and obtained by means of money.

A firman had been granted to the Greeks to enlarge the church at Bethlehem, and thereby to obtain the right of possession. Hereupon a Father of the Latin church travelled to Paris and Constantinople—not to secure this permission for the Latins, (for they have not the means) but to procure a counter firman, whereby the building was for the present suspended. The Christians here resolve themselves into the priesthood, which is ambitious and domineering, and reminds me of the caustic proverb :—

However small the priest appears,  
A little pope within he wears.

Not content with usurping dominion over the souls which are committed merely to their instruction ; not satisfied with carrying on a perpetual rivalry with their fraternity of other communions, no ! earthly aggrandizement and worldly pomp, and distinctions, are deemed indispensable to elevate and support the dignity of the spiritual edifice. It is possible that a Roman Catholic or a Greek may regard these things in a different light, that he may deem the temporal, as well as the spiritual regimen of

his church, indispensable to the salvation of man, and that he therefore approves all means which tend to promote it, and cheerfully tolerates that usurpation which it claims. I do not acknowledge the supremacy of any church, and hence their reciprocal hatred and oppression is fearful in my eyes.

\* \* \* The day before yesterday, after high mass, I received a visit from the Padre Presidente, the superior of all the establishments and concerns of the Terra Santa, accompanied by the Padre Procurador, who has the management of the property of these convents, and three other fathers, one of whom was my old acquaintance of the steam-boat. The conversation turned on various topics connected with events now passing in the world, and we praised some things, and blamed others. To an observation which fell from me, the Padre Presidente replied, "We may ignore some things and tolerate many, but the dogma must be maintained unimpaired." Is not the whole spirit of the Romish religion contained in these few words? It is worldly wise, conniving, and immovable. I must frankly own, that notwithstanding my respect for it, in one sense, I have a decided aversion from its hierarchy, because it encroaches on the temporal power, and injures its own dignity.

You cannot think what a fine picture an artist might have made of this group, of five Franciscans, seated in their brown cowls, their hempen girdles, their coarse sandals, and little black skull caps.

They were all remarkably handsome men, in the vigour of life; very unlike those fat, well fed monks, from whom I turned with such unfeigned disgust at Rome and Naples.

The Padre Presidente, who has the rank of a mitred abbot, and the title of Reverendissimo, wore over his cowl an ample brown cloak; his finely chiselled countenance had an expression of mildness and timidity which seems to point him out rather as a persuasive shepherd of souls, than as a priest invested with secular power. We spoke of Cairo, and Father Jean Battista laughingly reproached him with his partiality for that city; a slight flush crossed his countenance, as if this were a real ground for reproach, and he said smiling, "It is indeed true; but I lived in Cairo ten years."

There is a very great contrast between the Padre Presidente who, according to the rules of the Terra Santa must always be an Italian by birth, and the Padre Procurador, who must always be chosen from among the Spaniards. Strongly marked features, a deep toned voice, commanding deportment, and energetic movements, for which the monk's cowl is almost too narrow, distinguish the Padre Procurador, as a thoroughly able steward. The third is Padre Jean Battista, a prudent man, well versed in the ways of the world, who has successfully accomplished his mission in Paris; the two others are in attendance on the superior, and keep themselves within the bounds of hu-

mility, and passive obedience. They were the most interesting studies that a painter could desire, and formed a group to which my apartment furnished a most appropriate back ground.

The extraordinary freedom which is left to the inmates of the Casa Nova manifests a tact, which certainly is rarely met with. The monks bring forward nothing, they obtrude nothing, they suggest nothing; no difference is made, whether you go to mass daily, or whether you never go. This does not refer to myself, for they know that I am not a Roman Catholic.

The Protestants have of late exercised themselves much in good works. Hence, I thought it might perhaps be possible to found here a Protestant establishment, similar to the Casa Nova; but I see clearly that it would be wholly impossible to enjoy the same kind of freedom; for, without a religious domestic rule, which the President could maintain as a law, he would feel himself degraded, as he would then be considered as a mere caterer of the establishment. The Padre cannot be regarded in this light, and therefore a Roman Catholic establishment for pilgrims, however poor it may be, has always an imposing aspect. Hence a Protestant establishment is quite out of the question, especially as the several parties would not easily agree to whom it should belong, whether to the Calvinists, or to the Lutherans, to the Presbyterians, or to the Anglican Church.

Such, my dear brother, is the state of things

on this little spot of earth, among a few thousand people, who appear to live remote from the influences of the world; good and evil, tolerance and oppression are mingled together just as elsewhere; but it strikes us the more forcibly, because we naturally associate with Jerusalem something of the peace which its name indicates. Yet we ought to remember that men of like passions with ourselves dwell here. What right, therefore, have we to expect that they should be more perfect than we are?

Very strange individuals occasionally find their way to Jerusalem; and I had a visit, soon after my arrival, from a person who held most singular views. He was a tailor by trade, and did not come to ask for money, or assistance of any kind, but from motives of curiosity, because he had heard that some Germans had arrived at the Casa Nova, and he wished to know from what part of Germany they came. It appeared that he was a native of the Duchy of Sleswig, and had been brought up in Mecklenburg, though he did not appear to have profited much by his education. He had rambled all over the world, told us he had been in the East Indies, in Ethiopia, in America, and in every part of Europe; and wherefore? "God," he said, "had so ordained it." He then added, that God had also led him to Jerusalem, and that he intended to end his days there. I intimated that I supposed he must, of course, like Jerusalem? He replied,

“Not at all, because he found it very difficult to live among Mahometans; but that unless God should direct otherwise, he would remain here all the days of his life.”

This fanatical idea reminded me of the Wurtemberg peasants, who thought of settling in the valley of Jehosaphat, and in fact, came here. They immediately saw the impracticability of this mad scheme, and accordingly took their departure in a few days. You need only see the valley of Jehosaphat to be convinced that there is not much room for a living population there. A valley without vegetation, through which the Kidron, a brook which has no water, takes its course to the Dead Sea; the mountains of Zion and Moriah, on which Jerusalem is partly built, have rather steep declivities, and the ravines at their feet, which have slopes opposite to them, are called the valleys of Gihon, Ben Hinnonm, Jehosaphat and Kidron. The valley of the Kidron runs to the northward, and that of Gihon westwards from the city, in the plateau, and the valleys of Ben Hinnonm and Jehosaphat meet in an angle, at the foot of Mount Zion, but the valley of Jehosaphat extends yet further. Aqueducts, pools, cisterns, canals, and dry basins, half in ruins, still exist here, and in former times they may perhaps have given fertility and vegetation to these valleys, but now the olive alone flourishes in them.

Between En Rogel and the pool of Siloam, which forms a well in a deep rocky cavern, at the mouth of



the valley of Tyropeon, which here separates Zion from Ophel, there is a splendid mulberry-tree of unusual girth, with stones piled round the roots; gardens of fig-trees, plants and vegetables, grow on terraces, quite down to the bottom of the valley of Jehosaphat. On the slopes of the Mount of Offence lies the village of Siloam, which is inhabited by Troglodites. Some of these dwellings were formerly sepulchres, and have only one artificial wall, the other three being formed by the rock in which they are excavated; others are stone hovels, which hang from the steep declivity of the mountain, like so many swallows' nests.

At the pool of Siloam we met with several women, some carrying pitchers on their shoulders, and others a black swine without a head:—the swine's skin had been converted into a water vessel, and when filled, it really looked as if it were alive. The manner and appearance of these ugly women, with their swine's skin water jugs, were very unfit to be the representatives of the fair Rebecca with her pitcher of water at the well of Nahor!

## LETTER XXXIV.

TO MY SISTER.

Jericho—Sheikh Abdallah and our Escort—Richa—Bedouin Encampment—Life and independence of the Bedouins—The River Jordan—The Dead Sea—Convent of Mar-Saba—Bethlehem and its sacred localities—Convent of John the Baptist in the Wilderness.

Jerusalem, 11th November, 1843.

My dear Louisa,

IF we are not carrying on a continued, uninterrupted correspondence, we generally wait for some interesting or important circumstance to commence the long delayed letter. This has been my case; I have long intended writing to you, but I deferred from time to time, in the hope of being able to communicate something very agreeable; and my late excursion has certainly furnished me much of a highly interesting character. I have been to the Dead Sea, which is one of the greatest natural curiosities, both on account of its origin and situation below the level of the Mediterranean, and have likewise visited the river Jordan, and the little town of Bethlehem; all under the escort of sheikh Abdallah, with thirty Bedouins of the tribe Taumirah! I hope you will consider this not only interesting, but quite out of the common way. I assure you I did, and I have rarely been more gratified than by the occurrences of the last three days. Before entering upon the

details of my excursion, I will prefix a short introductory account of the Bedouins. In the vicinity of the Dead Sea, and in El Ghor, the broad valley of the Jordan, several of the Bedouin tribes lead a nomadic life. Here they might live independently of each other, in peace and plenty, for there is sufficient pasture for their cattle, but unfortunately the ancient hostilities of these tribes lead them constantly to interfere with each other. These strifes and animosities may, indeed, be appeased for a moment, or even suppressed for a time by force, on the part of the government, but they can never be eradicated till a new civilization takes the place of the primeval state of things.

Their deadly feuds originated in remote antiquity, from the following trivial circumstance. The Bedouins of the tribe of Taumirah stole a horse belonging to the tribe of Beni Sachr. Now as a horse is half the life of a Bedouin, but only the half, and the Beni Sachr revenged themselves by capturing one of the Taumirah Bedouins, and burying him alive, they outraged the Bedouin law, which demands "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Since this event, which occurred I know not how many centuries ago, a deadly enmity has prevailed between these two tribes.

The story of the man buried alive is the endless topic of conversation among the Taumirahs, and that of the stolen horse the incessant talk of the Beni Sachr. Where ideas are few, and events rare, tradi-

tions of bygone days are tenaciously adhered to. Frequent attempts have been made to discipline the Bedouins by force, and to make them give up their predatory incursions and hostile expeditions, but without success. They fled for refuge into the recesses of the deserts, where they were safe from their pursuers, because none but a Bedouin can find his way among the intricacies of the mountain holds, or is so well acquainted with the hidden springs of water.

Kindness appears to have more influence over them than violence; the sheikhs are thus made sensible of the advantages of a quiet life, and, through them, the influence must extend to the fractions of the different tribes of which they are the chiefs. These advantages consist in the acquisition of money, for even the Bedouin desires to possess this much coveted gift; but he is like the raven in the fable, who exclaimed, "I take it only that I may have it;" he does not mean to spend it; in fact, he cannot. He does not clothe himself more richly, does not make any change in his dwelling, or mode of life, does not want to educate his sons, or to provide for his daughters; no—he has no need whatever of money; and perhaps on that very account it may appear to him the more desirable; he may look upon it as a luxury, just as we may long for a Persian shawl, while a French one would answer the same purpose; or perhaps money

may be one of his many fantasies; — “fantasy” I must tell you is the term which the Arab applies to singularities, caprices, whims and fancies; everything, in short, which he cannot understand, or define, he classes under this comprehensive term “fantasy.” Now the Bedouins have a fantasia for money, and the Taumirah were not slow in discovering that it might be easily obtained by escorting strangers and travellers to the Dead Sea.

The countries beyond Jordan are rather unsafe on account of the savage tribes; and travellers are therefore glad to place themselves under the protection of the Bedouins. Unfortunately a fresh dispute has arisen between them; and their ancient hatred against the Beni Sachr has thus been revived. The Taumirah captured a couple of camels of the Beni Sachr, who declared that they took above a hundred. Thus the flame of discord now burns furiously, as the peculiarity of Bedouin law, “What has been stolen must be stolen again,” is now brought into active operation. A quiet restoration or indemnity is not considered as an adequate satisfaction: otherwise the Taumirah would have long since joyfully restored the unlucky camels, which have caused nothing but care and vexation; but the Beni Sachr disdain this. They will, and must find some suitable opportunity to steal them, and till this has been effected, the tribes live at open enmity, and attack each other whenever they meet.

The pacha of Jerusalem has for the present put the sheikh of Taumirah, the representative of his tribe, under a ban, so that he dare not show himself officially in the city, a circumstance which is highly disagreeable to him, as he is thus prevented from communicating with travellers. He sometimes privately visits the Prussian consul, who interests himself in his behalf; and as he considers him the safest guide we could have, he bargained with him to escort us on our intended excursion. The agreement was made for five hundred Turkish piastres, and an indefinite bakshish on the one part, and a sufficiently strong escort on the other, for three days.

On Wednesday the 8th we started at eight o'clock in the morning from the Casa Nova. As sheikh Abdallah is not permitted to come into the city, the Prussian consul rode with us beyond the gate to deliver us up to him; and, in case of necessity, to demand us back. I was excessively amused with the customs of this singular country, where you can be lost and demanded back.

We rode out of St. Stephen's gate, crossed the brook Kidron, and leaving the tomb of the Virgin on our left, and Gethsemene on our right, we proceeded round the foot of the Mount of Olives to Bethany. As soon as we entered this more open road, we were perceived by the Bedouins, who had passed the night in the village of Siloam, which is friendly to them, and immediately came up to us.

Sheikh Abdallah, who was on horseback, was the first to approach, and it was not till we were beyond Bethany that our escort was assembled. It consisted of thirty-five tall, athletic young men, some of whom were very handsome. They were dressed in white shirts, confined with a leathern girdle, and a brown and white striped mantle thrown loosely over their shoulders. Some of them wore a yellow keffijeh fastened round the head with a hempen band; some suffered it to flutter loosely, and others twisted it up into a turban. They all carried an indifferent gun upon their shoulders.

Sheikh Abdallah, whose costume exactly resembled that of his men, and who rode on a small, miserable grey horse, was nevertheless singularly conspicuous among them by his delicate and careworn countenance, his mild voice and quiet manners; indeed he does not possess any of the qualities which I should have expected in the chief of a savage horde. He is short and has no appearance of energy or command; and his demeanour portrays the reserve of an educated man, rather than the careless merriment of his people.

Abdallah is very uneasy about the dispute with the Beni Sachr, and the possibility of a reconciliation with them, or an amnesty from the pacha, while his men seemed totally indifferent about it. They laughed, chatted, and shouted like high-spirited, thoughtless lads, and walked and ran about with a grace and ease in their movements, which no

German can equal even in the ball-room, for our countrymen have not that light, easy carriage, which is master of every movement, and makes the body appear at once pliable and vigorous.

The Bedouins reminded me of Mercury, who is represented with wings at his heels, though certainly their clumsy shoes, hanging loosely about their naked feet, have no resemblance to wings. Some, however, had no shoes, yet they walked up and down hill, over rough stones and gravel, with their guns upon their shoulders, for nine hours together, always with a firm, light, and graceful step. I am delighted to be surrounded by men, in whom I can discern the unsophisticated work of God ; I have not enjoyed this pleasure since I was in Spain. By unsophisticated I mean the rude man—using *rude* in the same sense as we say *raw* of silk, namely, not prepared ; men of whom not a trace is to be found among us, who are the splendid, yet crippled victims of our refinement, and our civilization. We may be amiable, intellectual, charming, acute and profound ; but we are assuredly not the *unsophisticated* work of God ! and I speak sincerely when I say that I would renounce all my acquired refinement, if I could be such.

It was fortunate for me that the inhabitants afforded me such ample scope for observation, because nature is here too arid and barren to yield any gratification. The contour of the mountains, their ridges, and their deep gorges, declivities and



clefts, the soil, and the vegetation, partake of this ungenial character. You must bear in mind, dear sister, that my tour in Syria being performed at the season which is by far the most favourable to travelling, viz. between the hot and the rainy seasons, is at the same time the most unfavourable to vegetation. The fertility of the soil cannot be judged of by its products, for the harvest is all gathered in; the country lies fallow, and meadow-land is all that is now seen. All the beautiful plants are out of blossom, withered or covered with dust, and all the fine bulbous plants, tulips, hyacinths, and lilies, which make the country so lovely in the spring, are dead. Yet I can conceive that the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon may smile beneath the summer skies in rich and luxuriant beauty; that the little pomegranate, citron, and almond trees, around the villages in the mountains of Judea may glow in mingled tints of varied hue, and shed their balmy fragrance around; but it is utterly impossible that this should be the case in the country between Jerusalem and the valley of the Jordan.

Nature seems here to have lost her creative powers; the energy of life is gone; hence nothing can endure but the cold stone. We however passed a clear gurgling brook, which our Bedouins joyfully besieged, and slaked their thirst at its cool waters. Suddenly there was a great commotion among them, and a report that the vanguard descried a band of robbers; but where? in a deep ravine at least a hundred feet per-

pendicularly below the tract which we were pursuing, and therefore we certainly had nothing to fear from them.

The road here was exactly like that from the valley of the Kishon to Nazareth or from Ramla to Jerusalem, and led over numerous ridges of hills, and then along the edge of clefts, which intersected them. When we reached the brow of the last mountain, the steep precipice abruptly descended in a rugged zigzag road to a great depth, and the valley of El Gohr lay before us. It is a wide extensive plain, running northwards between a range of mountains, and bounded on the east by the trans-jordan chain of Pisgah. To the south lies the Dead Sea, some bright points of which we perceived now and then, as we approached it from the west. The waters of the Jordan were not visible, but its course was indicated by the bright verdure of the bushes growing along its banks.

There is nothing to mark the exact site of Jericho, which once stood in this plain, though Herod the Great, who had a particular predilection for that town, adorned it with splendid edifices in the Roman taste and style. I can understand why the ancient works of art have vanished. I can form a lively picture of the Roman circus and its bloody games ; of the Grecian hippodrome and its graceful exercises ; but neither the one nor the other was suited to the Israelites ; they had not sufficient refinement to appreciate the elegance of the latter, nor the inhumanity to enjoy the barbarity of the former. But I

cannot conceive what has become of the palms from which the Crusaders, after bathing in the Jordan, on their leaving the Holy Land, plucked branches to carry home as trophies of peace. If there are any they must be very small and sparingly scattered, for I did not see a single one, either near or at a distance, which, if there are any, is the more unaccountable, because they always form a very conspicuous feature in the landscape, by their majestic and elegant appearance. Small tamerisks and nebbeks, willows and poplars, and, near the village of Richa, a few fig and pomegranate trees, are the only ones that I have seen here.

Whether this village be the remains of Jericho, or whether the ruins which are seen at the foot of the mountains be so, I must leave to wiser heads than my own to inquire. I thought the less on the subject, because we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of a Bedouin camp. A charming little brook, bordered with thick bushes, meanders on this side of Richa, and the small streams, which flow from the mountains in the winter had thrown up such high banks on either side, that when we were in the plain, they obstructed the view, and I was consequently taken quite by surprise.

Sheikh Abdallah having found on inquiry, that these Bedouins were friends of his tribe, we pitched our camp near an ancient decayed watch-tower, which is designated a castle, because some Albanian soldiers are encamped there. The Arab tents were in groups of six or ten together, and scattered over

an extent of one league in the plain ; some were opposite to us at about twenty paces distant, some on the other side of the castle, and others further off.

The shape of the Bedouin tents differ from ours ; the stakes and cords are so set up and stretched that they form an oblong parallelogram. They are covered with a dark brown hair-cloth, resembling felt, and are quite open on one of the long sides ; they are divided by a partition of the same stuff, into two equal parts, one of which is their sitting-room, in which there are mats and cushions, which serve for beds at night, and the other is appropriated to domestic purposes, and therefore chiefly inhabited by the women. But as a tent is always a narrow space, the inmates, whether busy or idle, prefer the fresh air, especially as the form and openness of these tents, entirely precludes the possibility of privacy or separate employment.

The afternoon was magnificent, lighted up by a brilliant sun, as is generally the case after rain has fallen in the morning from broken clouds. I have read somewhere that the climate of El Gohr is as far more southerly than that of Jerusalem, as if it were six degrees instead of six leagues distant ; and certainly we found ourselves transported from the temperature of autumn to that of summer. This, combined with the glow thrown around by the setting sun, gave an air of enchantment to the gay scene.

It was altogether excessively interesting; here were men in the most simple, and the most satisfactory relations, whose wishes and wants are entirely adapted to the sphere in which they are placed; and, at the same time are so happily constituted, that they find in it more enjoyment than privation. They possess a freedom and liberty which would completely discomfit our European theoretical declaimers of liberty, and put them to eternal silence, did these theorists understand by freedom the realization of their speculations, or the attainment of personal advantages. According to them freedom resides in legislative chambers, in a free press, that is to say, in speeches and in books; — but it exists, in deed and in truth under the tent of the Bedouin.

To be free, each individual must be fully conscious of his own personal freedom from restraint; and isolation is indispensable to freedom. The Bedouin enjoys both; he feels like a king in his tent, but he and his tent are so completely detached, that he forms not the link of a chain, but an independent point which concentrates in itself, beginning, completion and end. The Bedouin is the individual man who feels as such, and is always ready to act for himself, and everywhere to make his own way; of this the European has no idea whatever. In the first place, the European belongs to the state, then to this class, and then to his office; next his friends and society put him in fetters, and lastly education, fashion and refinement lay hands upon him, and all

this he must realize and combine in his life, actions, thoughts, and doings; and, when he has accomplished this, he is a good citizen! This is doubtless very respectable; but it is a state of things in which there is no individuality, no isolation, and consequently no capability of freedom.

The Bedouin on the other hand, is incapable of being a good citizen. I am interested only in individualities—in the masses, only, when I find them agitated, excited, electrified, raised, or whatever it may be called, by individuals; for instance, I am more interested in William Tell, than in the Swiss whom he delivered; more in Beethoven, than in the orchestra which he directed; more in Alexander the Great, than in his victorious armies and subjugated nations. Even if individuality could rise up in Europe it would not be tolerated; and if it exists in places, few and far between, it must act as if it were not individuality. The complex, refined, artificial state of our civilization is not made for the individual—this I very clearly perceive. No single voice can make itself heard amid the din of machinery and steam-engines:—hence this striving for association; these societies for, or against every thing possible, and these schools, parties, societies and journals: all this makes freedom, I mean genuine freedom, utterly impracticable in Europe, Princes will long be alarmed and nations deluded with this bugbear of freedom, which originated

not from the nature of man, but from that of the citizen.

Oh ! the Bedouins ! Peace be on their tents, and may Heaven preserve them in their free and wild independence ! Wild they are undoubtedly, dear Louisa, and wholly without culture ; they have never had a newspaper in their hands, never heard an opera, never seen an exhibition of works of art ; and they know nothing of my Cecil—poor creatures ! Their dress is a shirt and a cloak ; their children run about naked ; (there is no freedom without a little wildness !) they are temperate in the highest degree, and it is only on grand occasions,—such as a wedding, or on the visit of a guest whom they desire to honour, that a lamb is killed. Hence they are in sound health, even at the most advanced age, and their extreme temperance contributes to their great purity of life. An immoral young woman is unheard of among the Bedouins, though marriages are not usual at a very early age. The married state is austere and strict ; the husband is the master ; the wife and children obey and serve him, not reluctantly, and not oppressed as by a capricious husband and father, but as the head of the family. The less self-dependent the man is, the more he depends on external relations, the more he is distracted by a thousand adventitious, conventional forms ; the more does he lose in regard to the woman, that respectful consideration or submission, which he

enjoys in a state of freedom. Of course there can be no harem in a Bedouin tent. In the state of things in which they live, no other place could well be assigned to the women : it is nearly the same as that held by the wife of the knight in the middle ages.

The children give their mothers but little trouble, even at their birth, which seldom keeps her from work more than one day. Till the child can run alone, she generally carries it about with her ; and it does not in the least impede her in her occupations. She carries water and wood, and grinds corn, while the infant hangs at her breast wrapped in her veil ; and, when only six months old, it attempts to walk. The infant, however, has a cradle made of the skin of some animal, which is suspended by cords between a couple of poles ; as soon as it can crawl, it occasions no further trouble to any one.

There were some dozen of children playing about before the tents ; but they were all ugly, and insufferably dirty. Groups of women were sitting in and near the tents, grinding wheat between two stones, picking rice, and kneading dough, that is to say, flour and water, which they formed into round, flat cakes, about the size of a plate, and baked between hot ashes ; it is quite a rarity to bake them on an iron plate. Some of the women were sitting very composedly and smoking, others went to and fro, drew water, or looked after the kids and lambs, which were enclosed in small pens.



made of branches of thorn. It is said that they also weave the coverings for their tents; but I have not seen them so employed.

Their dress consists of a long garment hanging down to the ground, made of dark blue calico, ample white pantaloons, and a dark blue veil which falls loosely over the face and bosom. Their arms are painted with blue figures, and ornamented with numerous coloured glass rings; sometimes they wear leaden or silver bracelets, set with small pieces of coloured glass. Their very inelegant bust is happily almost wholly concealed by numberless chains, rows of red beads, and large silver coins, which are strung together on a thread. They are of a compact and upright make; their step and movements are firm and decided; their features are strongly marked, and their eyes large and animated. It is as uncommon to see a deformed woman, as a deformed man. Their old age is neither lonely, wretched, nor melancholy. "The hoary head is a crown of glory" among the Bedouins. The aged people are waited upon by the younger members of the family, the men by the youths, and the women by the girls. Their wants are so few that this service is extremely easy; all they have to do is to light a pipe, to spread a mat, or to bring food.

From the cradle to the grave, the life of the Bedouin is never a burthen, never a struggle; and, if interwoven with petty cares and troubles, it is not

tormented with uneasiness for the future, discontent at the present, or remorse for the past ; they do not fruitlessly pore over vain sophistries, or indulge extravagant flights into the infinite void ; calm contentment is the copious refreshing stream which imparts a healthy, vigorous existence from one generation to another. Hence every generation is as vigorous as if it had just issued from the hands of its Creator ; not languid, not faded, not enfeebled, as among us, where we seldom see a plump, rosy cheeked child, but, alas ! numbers of young girls afflicted with nervous complaints.

Simple habits, moderate enjoyments, and purity of morals, give a free circulation to the blood, and make it healthy ; these three things are rarely to be found in Europe, and therefore the blood of the European is impoverished. To this may be added a fourth desideratum—fresh air ; whether by day or night, in summer or winter, in heat or in rain, the Bedouin is always exposed to the influence of that delightful element, and he consequently enjoys not only health, but a sense of liberty. He who has learnt independence in the Desert, knows that he can rely on himself, and has no need to seek the assistance of others. In Europe there is no free air, either physically or morally, and therefore, no freedom : for say, where is fresh air to be found ? In the huts of the peasants, where ten or twelve people are shut up, eight months of the year, in the dark, confined space of one little smoky room ?—in the suffocating

ill-ventilated workshop of a shoemaker or a tailor, or of any other artizan?—or is it to be found in barracks, or in a public office, or in a counting-house, or in our air-tight rooms, perfumed with flowers and scents?

Is fresh air to be found in our courts of justice, our lecture rooms, our schools for the young?—or does it refresh our dining-rooms, our ball-rooms, or our theatres? We live and die in an artificial atmosphere, which contracts the chest, weakens the nerves; dulls and overstrains the senses, to such a degree that our poor, vapid body, must renounce the freedom, which it is quite unable to endure. We may indeed breathe the fresh air when we ramble alone over the mountains' heights, or embark on the wide ocean, and shake off the hundred thousand ties which bind us to society; but, as soon as we return home, we again become subject to the influences and associations of civil life. Europe is a hot-house, which, by means of art, produces the most interesting and manifold plants: it can display the productions of genius, invention, research, study, and talent, for organization, masterly calculations of the co-operation of various powers, and a thousand other things; but it manifestly proves that its soil is not calculated to produce the hardy and vigorous plant of freedom.

I sat for a long time at the low breastwork of the little tower, on the platform of which the soldiers were kneading bread, and drying maize. I looked

indeed at the mountains of Jordan and the Dead Sea, but only as we regard the scenery of an historical picture. Here I had such a picture before me : the history of the earliest condition of our race, not painted on canvass, but in a living character. Indeed, my dear Louisa, a journey in the East is not a mere tour of pleasure, as I took for granted before I set out ; it has too many discordant moments, and offers too little of what is agreeable and flattering to us ; namely—art and beauty ; but it is more rich than any other in strong and powerful impressions, and, if we do not designate these, by the word pleasure, it is because that term is not sufficiently expressive.

The women were chatting and pursuing their various avocations, while the children enjoyed themselves at play, and the flocks were quietly at pasture ; some of the men were sitting together in groups, talking over the stories and concerns of their tribe, and others came riding slowly from different quarters, as if they had been in search of information, or keeping watch, or taking measures for their safety. Everything was completely in order, precisely as it ought to be : each seemed to be in his proper place, and to be content with it. We afterwards walked about among the tents, and entered some of them to see the women at work. We met with sheikh Abdallah, who was smoking a pipe with the sheikh of this camp.

I told the latter, (of course through the dragoman),

that I wished to visit his wife ; he acquiesced cheerfully, and conducted us to his tent. It did not at all differ from the rest ; but his wife, a very pretty woman, with an older female at her side, was seated before it, very leisurely smoking her pipe. She is the prettiest Arabian woman whom I have yet seen, and though by no means a beauty has a natural grace in her look and smile.

As I passed along, the women saluted me by calling out, "Mir haba," the sheikh's wife greeted me in a similar manner, and beckoned to me with the hand in the Eastern fashion, which is just the reverse of our token to approach. Of course I could have but little conversation with them, for it is very tedious to interpret every word ; however, I amused myself by examining their dress, domestic utensils, the division of the tent, and the manner in which they spoke to each other.

After I had gone to my tent, the sheikh's wife accompanied by a noisy train of women and children returned my visit. One of our Bedouins kept guard near me lest it should be necessary to repress their importunate curiosity, and he was really obliged to drive away the children. Evening, however, restored tranquillity ; all returned to their tents, before most of which a fire of brushwood was kindled. For some time I heard the busy indistinct hum of life which always prevails towards the close of evening, just before night sets in ;—the deep tones of the men, the clear voices of the women, the bleating of the flocks,

the stamping of the horses; the distant halloo of a benighted traveller, a few notes of a song, or the musical whistle of a home-bound Bedouin;—and then all was hushed. The dogs began to bark, and the cricket set up its piercing chirp.

Our little encampment presented a scene of merriment till a late hour. I had given about a dollar to sheikh Abdallah for himself and his companions. He spent a third part of the sum in purchasing barley for his horse, and for that of one of his friends who had joined us at Richa, and, with the remainder, these thirty-two Arabs feasted on bread and milk, around large fires of brushwood.

On the following morning we set out excessively early—about four o'clock, and without any sufficient reason; but the dragoman and the sheikh affirmed that we had a very long day's journey before us. The grey mantle of night was still spread over the heavens and the earth, and the air was very damp and oppressive when we started. A few fires already glimmered near the tents, but on the whole, the camp was at rest. Nay, as we rode an hour later through a second division of the camp, the same stillness prevailed, but the dogs surrounded us, and barked furiously.

Sheikh Abdallah sent some of his men into the tents to announce that he was passing by, and accordingly, nobody stirred from his place. A fine rain was falling, and the air was as sultry, as it is in Germany in the heat of summer before a thunder-

storm, and I found it most uncomfortable to travel in the dark. We proceeded very slowly, having to pass, as yesterday, through low brushwood, dried up brooks, and over small ridges of earth. After riding two hours we stopped at one of these ridges; trees and bushes extended to the right and left, but just before us was a narrow opening leading to the banks, and here the Jordan flowed at our feet, murmuring like a playful stream. This spot is called the "Pilgrim's bath," and every year, after Easter, thousands of oriental Christians come hither in pilgrimage to bathe or wash in the waters of Jordan.

I alighted from my horse and went down the high bank to a tamarisk tree, which afforded me shelter against the rain which gradually abated, and entirely ceased at daybreak, so that it did not at all annoy me. The Jordan made a pleasing and soothing impression on my mind. I had imagined that it was much larger and broader, because the mighty Baptist there preached to thousands, who flocked thither from all the surrounding countries, to be baptized by him. I had fancied that the scenery around must harmonize with the greatness of his work; but, truth is, we associate with the sacred figures of the Baptist and his divine Master, every thing that is grand and exalted. It is a small, quiet, retired looking spot, softly sheltered, as by the wings of the gentle dove. The morning welcomed the rising sun, and rustled among the branches of the

silver poplars, willows and tamarisks, which tremblingly shook off the glistening drops of rain.

I had two bottles filled with the water of Jordan, which I am resolved to bring home, though I scarcely know why. Our dragoman, however, being commissioned by the captain of a French ship, who is in the Casa Nova, but would not undertake a journey to the Jordan, had brought a horse with two large vessels, which he was to fill and deliver to the captain who intends to take this water to France, where he expects to sell it to advantage. This certainly is not my intention; but it suggested to me the idea that some of my German friends might be pleased to have a little of the water of the Jordan. I then washed my hands in the river, and as no palms now grow there, I plucked a few beautiful sprigs of tamarisk which look like bunches of green marabout feathers, and placed them in my hat.

We rested half an hour at this interesting spot, and rode forward to the Dead Sea; but we were obliged to leave the Jordan, because its banks are thickly overgrown. On the other side rise low hills, and beyond them the mountain chain, which forms the eastern border of the basin of the Dead Sea. If I ever saw a spot lighted up in a manner suitable to the idea which I had conceived of it, it was the Dead Sea on the morning before yesterday. Heavy masses of thunder clouds were suspended over the sea; the sky was of a deep lead colour, streaked



with bright lines of light; sometimes a cloud discharged itself, and then a long stream of rain hung like a transparent grey veil, from the sky into the water, and partially shrouded the sombre mountain chain. The sea was of a yellow colour, and its towering, broad waves, whose dark greenish ramparts were crested with long ridges of silver foam, were tossed up into the air, and then again dashed into the depths below. A strong, stiff wind passed over the Sea, and the waves broke as impetuously against the bank, as the foaming billows of the ocean.

The air over the angry element was so sultry, that when I turned my face towards the plain, the wind from that quarter felt quite chilly. The water too was extremely warm, and smelt a little (I must not say like sulphur if I am to speak the truth,) but like the steam of a mineral spring. We found a piece of pumice stone, which is a volcanic production, as large as a man's head, and several fragments of bitumen, which is said to appear in considerable masses on the surface of the sea after an earthquake. The pieces we found were lying on the sands of the bank, and we had them packed, and placed on the horse, which was carrying the two vessels with the water of the Jordan. We also saw thin layers of salt lying in small hollows about the size of a cup. Strange plants too, stiff and thorny, such as predominate in this country, grew thick and high, wherever the ground was not covered with deep sand;

the rose of Jericho and the apple of Sodom may have been among them. I was quite resolved, if possible, to obtain one of the latter; but we found nothing that could pass for an apple, except the golden fruit of a kind of *Solanum*; and when I cut it open to make sure whether it was really filled with dust and ashes, I discovered that it contained only kernels and a watery fluid.

The rain during the night had converted the whole bank into a soft clay, in which the horse sunk at every step, and practically illustrated how birds are caught on limed twigs. We then rode for some distance through the plain, and began to ascend into the mountains which bound the western bank of the Dead Sea, and in some instances slope to the water's edge as smooth as a wall. Here we saw the mountain which the Arabs call *Nebbi Mousa*, where their tradition places the grave of Moses, over which a mosque is built; it is interesting on account of the beautiful black stone which is dug in this mountain, and of which all kinds of trifles, such as cups, paper pressers, &c., are made.

The clouds gradually ceased to traverse the sky in wild confusion, and, contracting themselves into firm and solid masses, discharged their condensed waters in torrents of rain. Whenever a fresh shower fell, the Bedouins ran on before, and sought shelter in the numerous caves with which these rocks are perforated; and as soon as it ceased they galloped after us at full speed. The friend of

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sheikh Abdallah, who rode a handsome roan horse, and was armed with a lancee, invariably took particular pains to exhibit to us the djerid, as far as it can be executed by one horseman. After every evolution he galloped up to me, and saluted me with the most courteous coquetry, that I might not entertain the slightest doubt, that it was his desire to please me; but as my horse, to my no small terror, always started on one side, whenever the roan horse came springing forward, and paraded within a few paces of him, I did not receive this demonstration of gallantry with becoming grace, though both the horse and his rider acquitted themselves admirably, and doubly so because it was venturesome, on account of the stony ground, and the steep precipices.

Our road too, was considered very dangerous in many places, the path being so narrow that the horses could but just set one foot before the other, while on the one side, the rocky wall rose perpendicularly, and on the other descended into a ravine, into which we might easily have fallen, on account of the loose stones; but with sure footed horses no danger is to be apprehended. We rode for five hours, through a truly rocky desert, where not a tree, not a shrub, not even a blade of grass was to be seen. About noon the rain ceased, the clouds disappeared, the sky became blue, the sun shone clear and warm, and I alighted from my horse and walked, in order to warm and dry myself.

From an elevated spot, I again beheld the Dead Sea, looking exactly as I had often seen it before : dark blue spots sparkling between the clefts of the rocks, like sapphires set in gold. The character which it bore early in the day had vanished like an unquiet morning dream : but I do not wish that it had then been otherwise. I was most agreeably surprised when our dizzy dangerous path suddenly terminated in a very good road, and two large towers built of hewn stone, rose like beacons on the summit of a perpendicular precipice. This was the monastery of Mar Saba, and thus we had happily wound our way into the valley of Jehosaphat.

The Christians of the first centuries were happy when they found places where they could devote themselves, without molestation, to a contemplative life, and pious meditation. The heathen world at that time left them only two ways — martyrdom, or total seclusion, and the latter often preserved them from the former. They sought to fix their residence where nothing reminded them of the vices, the pleasures, the enjoyments, and the opinions of a world which they abhorred. The dry, solitary, gloomy valley of Jehosaphat, in its windings between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, was peculiarly adapted to their purpose ; perhaps they participated in the Jewish belief, that the last judgment will be held in this valley ; and thus heightened the natural terrors of the place by superadding spiritual fears.

However this be, anchorites took up their abode

in the caves of these rocks, which formed almost inaccessible cells; and in the fifth century Saint Sabas founded here a Laura, that is, society of hermits, who lived separately from each other, and who had no centre, save that of common devotion. Saint Sabas was an ardent persecutor of the heretodox, and was held in high honour by the orthodox Byzantine emperors, Justin I., and Justinian. He died in 532, at the age of nearly one hundred years. The number of his anchorites is said to have gradually increased to ten thousand, which is incredible; and, if we believe it, excites an unpleasant feeling: for a world peopled by anchorites is too monotonous, and absurd.

In the seventh century, the Arabs came and exercised their fury on the pious hermits; this dispersed and checked the increase of the numbers of the devotees, some individuals only gradually returned, and these abandoned their caves for the more secure walls of a monastery. The anchorites were cenobites or hermits, as they are now called, most strictly cut off from the external world, and defended, as far as possible, against hostile attacks. Mar is an Arabian word, signifying Lord, and also holy, Mar Saba: Mar Elia: thus the Apostles in their Epistles sometimes use this term of our Saviour, when they say the Lord Jesus.

The nearer we approached, the better view we had of the several parts of this singular monastery, which looks like masses of the rock hewn into the form

of a church, doors, towers, turrets, walls, and dwellings, ranged in tiers one above the other. It rather resembles a fortress, in an important mountain defile, than a convent for harmless, hospitable hermits. But all the monasteries are built, more or less, in this style, in the remembrance of former pillage and ill usage, to render them more inaccessible if such times should ever return.

Mar Saba belongs to Greek monks, and it is said that there are now fifty in the convent, who live in the strictest seclusion. In every other monastery the church is without side, in order to give access to the women, who are allowed to pass freely over the fore court. This is not the case here; female pilgrims however come hither, and a second tower, which stands quite detached from the convent, on the other side of a narrow ravine, has not only apartments, but a chapel appropriated to their use. Instead of windows, this tower has loop holes like embrasures; instead of a door, an opening so low, that it must be entered on all fours; and instead of a threshold, the place is approached by climbing up a ladder. When it has been mounted, the ladder is drawn up, and the inmates can then stand a siege without apprehension, for certainly no creature without wings can enter their retreat.

We took possession of the tower, the servants and horses were accommodated in the court, appropriated to such guests, and the Bedouins were lodged in the vestibule of the church, which has a

spacious portico. I did not feel at all comfortable in my embattled tower, and ascended the platform to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. The prospect was not more extensive than from below, for amid these rocks the height of a tower makes no material difference. I fondly hoped to have a distant view of the Dead Sea; but no, I saw only the rocky valley, the rock built monastery, and further on, above and around me, nought but rocks, in which I observed numerous caverns, the entrances to which were partly fashioned by the hand of man, and brought to my mind their ancient inhabitants.

I was not here as on Mount Carmel, in an elevated and lovely seclusion of nature, where dwell pious monks, in cheerful and benevolent converse with mankind; but in a rigorous Carthusian convent formed by the hand of nature, and which, by its sternness, cuts off its inhabitants from all participation in the ways of the world. For miles around no village or dwelling is to be seen, and no shepherd drives his flock amid these inhospitable heights. Some pilgrims during the Easter festivals, and a few travellers direct their steps hither, and find everything that they may require; but their sojourn is not as agreeable as at Carmel, because the monks are invisible. The servants, however, were as obliging as we could wish.

While I was on the top of the tower, a party of our Bedouins, who had either gone round some other way, or had lagged behind, came round the opposite

rocks of the valley of Jehosaphat, and in order to reach us, descended into the abyss below, by a precipice which seemed to be as perpendicular as a wall; there were, doubtless, some narrow ledges and projections; but, at a distance, one man seemed to hang above the head of another. They mounted our side from the abyss, singing and shouting in the same manner as when they descended, and saluted me with "Mir haba," as soon as they perceived me. I spell this salutation, which means "Welcome," as it sounds to my ear. The letters, dear Louisa, may not be correct, for the Arabs scarcely articulate the vowels, except the *a*; the other four are enveloped in mystic obscurity, so that I am constantly in doubt, whether I hear an *i*, or a *u*; a clear *e* is never heard.

Sheikh Abdallah accompanied us into the tower to see whether we were likely to be exposed to any danger or annoyance; he was extremely attentive to us throughout our journey, and always kept close to us in riding, with some of his most faithful attendants. After the servants of the convent had supplied him with coffee, as being one of our party, he withdrew to his own people. I greatly admired the tact of this man. Yesterday when we were at Richa he wished some of his men to assist our people in pitching the tents. They, however, did not seem disposed to do so, while he, at the same time, appeared unwilling to compel them: he accordingly went up to the baggage, took up some of



the stakes, carried them to the dragoman, and said a few words to his Bedouins, who instantly followed his example ; whereupon he threw down the stakes and looked on.

At Mar Saba my travelling companion visited the church, while I remained without, and, seating myself on a projecting rock, I observed the striking difference between the make, and corporeal strength of the Bedouins and of the other Arab tribes. Some alterations were being made in the convent, and while the workmen, toiling and panting, dragged the heavy stones along, the Bedouins lifted them with ease upon their left shoulders, and slightly supporting them with their hand, descended the hill with as little constraint as if they had been carrying their guns.

I had scarcely seated myself, when sheikh Abdallah stepped forward, to let me know that he was within call ; and afterwards, when I wound my way upwards among the rocks, where he lost sight of me, he gallantly clambered up after me, and like a genuine Bedouin, of course chose the steepest part, followed by one of his men, lest I should lose my way in this wilderness of stone.

From my present knowledge of an escort of Bedouins I should not, for a moment, hesitate to go under their protection, even in the most troublesome times, through the notorious districts of Nablous and Samaria ; nay, I would even venture across the whole of Syria to Damascus ; for both

person and property are perfectly safe under their care. Unfortunately this conviction is only attained by experience, that is to say, when it is too late to be of service.

During our journey yesterday morning, across the Desert tract from Mar Saba to Bethlehem, we saw neither tree nor shrub, for the space of three hours. We, however, met with a snake, which is considered a great curiosity in this neighbourhood, where it is seldom found. The far-famed dragon slain by the Knight of Rhodes could scarcely have caused more commotion than did this harmless snake among the terrified Bedouins, who stoned it to death in a trice. Our monotonous journey was soon enlivened by a sight which afforded me more gratification than a snake—a tree! a welcome indication of the vitality of nature! then another, and another, and further on, even groups of trees.

At length we had passed the stony wilderness, and the little town of Bethlehem suddenly lay before us, beautifully situated, amid groves of olives, vines, almonds, and fig trees, and reposing quietly in the saddle of the steep side of the hill sloped down to the bosom of the valley, through which meanders a small rivulet. The inhabitants were cultivating the soil, which had been loosened by the late rains; and we saw a few men ploughing the land in shallow furrows. All nature looked lovely and smiling as spring; here and there the young grass had already sprung up fresh and soft as velvet;

the little birds were singing gaily, and the whole presented a picture of quiet repose, incomparably adapted to the Scripture Idyl of Ruth, to the home of the early days of the shepherd boy David, and to the cradle of the Prince of Peace.

We alighted at the convent of the Terra Santa, where we breakfasted, and immediately afterwards proceeded to the church. It is the same building which the pious Empress Helena caused to be erected over the stable and manger, in the basilica style, and which was afterwards greatly embellished by Constantine, and is blended with many repairs and restorations. The church is in the form of a cross, and the nave is supported by forty beautiful marble pillars with clumsy chapiters, which divide the interior into three long aisles. The mosaic work of the walls has been partly torn out, and partly daubed over by the Mahometans, for it suffered greatly, not only from their devastations, but from those of other inimical conquerors, especially during the times of the Crusades. The whole edifice is so decayed and dilapidated, that the choir has been separated by a wall from the nave, which is kept in a state of preservation, for the performance of divine service, while the rest is suffered to fall completely into ruins. The entablature of the flat ceiling is said to be of cedar.

This building up and repairing is the source of great disputes between the Latins and Greeks; the former have been altogether expelled from the

church itself, of which the Greeks have taken possession, and granted a side altar to the Armenians. The Latins have only retained the permission of passing through it to the rocky cave where Christ was born. Here two niches covered with the most splendid decorations of marble, and lighted up with ever burning lamps, indicate the birth-place of the Saviour of the world, and the manger in which he was laid. Of this place the Latins have the possession; and the grotto or cave is decorated with silk hangings and some tolerable pictures, according to the custom of the Roman Catholic Church. I cannot say that this arrangement and style were at all suited to my taste. My thoughts became quite disturbed with pondering on the conflicting accounts of what I had heard, and read, and now saw; here the birth took place, there stood the manger, and yonder was the exit to the level road; and, in my endeavours to impress upon my mind the topography of the place, I lost sight of the main point—of Christ who was born here.

Robinson, who has rendered great service to all parties, by his *Geography of Palestine*, appears to me to be altogether erroneous in his topographical researches of the *Loca Sancta*. He of course disputes the identity of this spot, as being the birth-place of Christ, and he grounds his chief argument upon this: that as the Evangelists state the circumstance of Christ having been born in the stable, they would not have omitted to mention the equally re-

markable fact, that that stable was a cave or grotto. Now, as far as I can see, this would not, by any means, appear a remarkable circumstance in the eyes of a person living in Palestine. Caves for shepherds and their flocks, for wells, for storing goods and provisions, for everything in short which man may require are to this day the most common thing in the world, and in perfect harmony with the character of the calcareous rocks, the natural caves of which seem to invite the people to make use of them, and thus spare themselves trouble, in a variety of ways ; nay, we sometimes even meet with entire villages of caves—as for instance that of Siloam.

Though these holy caves certainly do not edify me, and I can easily imagine that they were equally unedifying to Robinson and many others, still, this does not seem to be a satisfactory ground for disputing their identity.

The whole of the hill on which the church is situated is undermined. The Christians of the first century selected caves in the proximity of the holy grotto, not only for sepulchres, but for habitations. St. Jerome, one of the early fathers of the Christian church, lived in one of these caves, where he translated the Old Testament, and ended his days in the year 420. St. Eusebius of Cremona, a saint of the Romish Church, selected another for his last resting place. In a third are deposited the honoured remains of a noble Roman matron and her daughter, whose piety led them to Bethlehem, to found a convent; and

thus the last branches of the illustrious Scipios and the fiery Gracchi, rest darkly and humbly beside the lowly manger.

A fourth is said to contain the bones of the Innocents, whom Herod the Great slew in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, in the vain hope that among them was the young child who had been proclaimed by the ancient prophets as the future King of Israel. Above this Infant Necropolis stands the chapel dedicated to St. Catherine, which belongs to the Latins; and, beyond the village, is a little oratory which likewise belongs to them, and which they call the Refuge of the Blessed Virgin, because she is said to have taken shelter here during that scene of horror. It is held in great veneration by the people, even by the Mahometans, who take their oath upon it.

On our return to the convent we saw a great number of Bedouins and Arabs assembled in groups in the large open space in front of it, surrounded by crowds of the villagers. Our dragoman met us, with the intelligence that sheikh Abdallah would probably be unable to escort us to Jerusalem, for that the Beni Sachr had arrived, and were going to hold judgment upon him. It soon appeared that the Beni Sachr had assembled in Bethlehem, with several umpires, to take into consideration whether the dispute with the Taumirah might not be amicably settled, without their having recourse to predatory retaliation. Such an arrangement had hitherto been wholly impracticable, in consequence

of the enormous difference in regard to number ; for the spoliated gave them in as three hundred camels, while the spoilers declared there were only thirty !

Sheikh Abdallah informed the delegates of the Beni Sachr that he was pledged to accompany us to Jerusalem, and that when he had discharged this duty he would return to carry on the negociation. In truth, however, no further danger was now to be apprehended, as he had himself intimated by giving permission to the greater number of his men to return to their home quarters.

After a short deliberation we mounted our horses and returned to Jerusalem, through the cheerful valley of Rephaim, and passed the grave of Rachel, which is held in equal veneration by both Mahometans and Israelites, for the progenitors of the Arabs and Jews were half brothers. Independently of this circumstance, Mahomet acknowledged the divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospel ; but he considered the Koran as the last and most exalted Revelation, which is to extend to eternity. Hence the Professors of Islamism, in spite of their invincible faith in their prophet and his doctrines, have a certain respect and reverence for the places and individuals connected with other creeds.

The tomb of Rachel is a little oratory covered with a dome, similar to that which rises above many other Turkish tombs. Further on we passed the

Greek convent of Mar Elias, and then winding through the valley of Gihon, approached Jerusalem, which was lighted up by the parting rays of the setting sun—like the faded cheek of a mourner, who seeks to veil her grief beneath a transient smile.

November 12.

The events narrated in my letter have been brought down to the present time, and, as I have given you an account of my excursions in the environs of Jerusalem, I will subjoin a few words respecting our ride to-day.

We went to the village and convent of St. John in the Wilderness. It is situated about two leagues from hence, in a valley, which, less than any other in this neighbourhood, deserves the name of wilderness, for it cannot only boast of the indigenous olive-tree, but also of fine gardens of fruit and vegetables, a rich arable soil, and even of the beautiful St. John's bread-fruit tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*) which grows wild here. Tradition, however, has marked it out as the residence of Zacharias and Elizabeth, the aged parents of St. John the Baptist, and, far down in the valley, it points out the spot where he prepared himself for his high and holy mission. It is a perfect seclusion, and this may be the reason why it is designated a wilderness.

The ride through the valley was most lovely. I



was indeed in the zone, where the austerity of winter is mitigated into the clemency of autumn ; but yesterday and to-day I have been, for the first time, in a region, where the closing days of autumn assumed the joyous aspect of a genial spring. The husbandmen and the villagers were cultivating their fields and gardens, as we do in March, and, independently of this ever verdant foliage, a smiling sky and a glorious sun are their unfailing portion.

Modin the mountain of the Macabees, lies on one side of the valley, and bears upon its brow an ancient edifice ; but whether it was a stronghold, or the monumental tomb of this great and noble deliverer of His people is not known. The valley is called the "Vale of Terebinths," which Luther has translated the "Vale of Oaks." It emerges from between the mountains of Judea, into the wide-spread plain of the coast, in the direction of Askalon, the city of the Philistines. This valley is pointed out as the memorable place where the stripling David slew the mighty Goliath with a sling and a stone.

You will readily perceive the utter impossibility of fixing the precise locality of individual places ; but the entire whole is pervaded with the sublime spirit of Biblical poetry and history, which invests every object with holy veneration and irresistible attraction. Oh ! to comprehend the exhaustless

riches of its hidden depths, and to rejoice in its marvellous simplicity! In the unbounded freeness of nature, my thoughts love to linger with the people, the deeds and the sentiments of those bygone days, and, undisturbed by the superadditions of later times, the inquiries of when and where; and unshackled by the controversies of the passing hour, my mind is absorbed, without distraction, in the contemplation of the undying reminiscences of the past.

The church of the Franciscan convent of St. John, is the finest of those belonging to the Terra Santa; it is a noble structure, though not very large, nor indeed would it be compatible with the means of the fraternity, as it is very expensive to keep up large establishments. The pictures and bas-relievs were presented by pious individuals; they can scarcely be termed mediocre, and no trace could I find of a Murillo, which is said to have been seen here.

On our return home, when we had gained the highest point of the road between St. John and Jerusalem, we had a view of the Mediterranean sea, in the direction of the mouth of the Vale of Terebinths and of the Dead Sea, to our left, thus overlooking Palestine in its entire extent from east to west. But this view was very transient, for it vanished after we had proceeded only a few steps, as the road rises and falls alternately, and is not of the

same height for five minutes together; on our route to St. John's, we did not perceive it, as the afternoon's sun shone most beautifully on the Mediterranean. This is the only point near Jerusalem where such a view can be obtained. Josephus, who has been ridiculed for making this assertion, may therefore have been right when he said, that the Mediterranean could be seen from the tower of Psephinus, the foundations of which have been discovered in the vicinity of the Jaffa gate.

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### LETTER XXXV.

TO MY MOTHER.

Hospital of the Empress Helena—Armenian Church—  
The so called Sacred fire—Jaffa Gate—Departure from  
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, November 13th. 1843.

EVERY thing which is not immediately connected with religion has hitherto been held in but little estimation; sacred reminiscences alone have formed the glory of the Holy City, while those of a secular character have dwindled into utter insignificance. Now, however, that the spirit of scientific research is so energetically exploring every object, we may confidently anticipate that the his-

torical events of this country will be invested with the garb of attraction, of which they have hitherto been destitute.

Nothing, for example, is known of the spot where the Latin Kings resided, nor of the original destination of the present citadel, which stands at the Jaffa gate, and is of massive workmanship; and which is sometimes called the Fort of David, the Pisan Tower, and likewise the Tower of Hippicus. It is not improbable that the royal psalmist there laid the foundation of his "house of cedar."

It is really painful that the greatest uncertainty prevails respecting those subjects, with which we desire to be acquainted, while those of minor importance, such as the house of the Pharisee, where Jesus sat at meat, are denoted with the utmost precision, and scrupulosity. Nay, in order that nothing may be wanting, by which not only tradition, but poetry may be honoured, even the house of Dives at whose gate Lazarus the beggar was laid, is shown to the credulous stranger! It is distinguished by gay arabesque work, several small ornamented arches, in the Moorish, or as it is here more properly designated, the Arabic style. I call it the Moorish, because I have never seen it anywhere but in Spain.

The large hospital, said to have been founded by the Empress Helena, for invalids and poor pilgrims, is also ornamented with Moorish carvings, from

which it is very evident that it must have been subsequently rebuilt, even if we take it for granted that it was instituted by her. In the niches of the large doors are exceedingly pretty vaulted chambers, which resemble stalactite caves, and the outer wall is ornamented with rosettes and graceful festoons in stonework. A sad contrast of decay is presented by the interior; the high walls are fallen in; unruly children were playing among the rumbling stones; a mill was going round and round with a creaking noise, and the dirt and rubbish were so offensive that I was actually forced to retire.

At this season of the year there are frequently heavy falls of rain accompanied by thunder and lightning. Such was the case on the day of my arrival; the thunder rolled awfully over Mount Zion; and since then we have had occasional rain. In the environs this is not very perceptible, as the soil greedily drinks in the water: but the streets of the city are almost as dirty as those of Constantinople, and the narrow raised pavements, which run along the fronts of the houses, are no great help to the pedestrian, because they are composed of large irregular flag stones, and are even more dirty than the middle of the road.

The rainy season, properly so called, does not set in till the middle of winter. The air is as pleasant now as it is with us in September, and the mornings and evenings are pleasantly cool.

That extreme heat which completely burns up the country along the coast, and converts some parts of it into a hot-house, has quite passed away, and I am able to go out without the slightest inconvenience, for several hours, in the hottest part of the day.

Dirty and disagreeable as these streets are, I nevertheless often stand still, to look at some object of interest, as I did just now before the gates of the hospital of Helena, or before ancient fountains. Some of these are beautiful, and have retained the chaste beauty of the workmanship of their niches, longer than the water which flowed in their basins, because all the aqueducts have been destroyed. Sometimes I stop to look at a venerable Roman stone, in some out-of-the-way house, whose origin is revealed by its bevelled border, and I long to ask whether it was transported hither, from the palace of one of the Asmonean princes, or from a temple of the Emperor Adrian.

This inquiry forcibly presented itself as I was standing at the Golden gate, at the eastern end of the city, which has been bricked up with Saracenic masonry, because the Mahometans thus vainly hope to evade the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, (doubtless founded on Ezekiel xlv. 1-3.) which announces that a Christian conqueror shall enter in by this gate, which leads to the area of the Sakhara mosque.

The substructure and the lateral buildings of this gate are evidently very ancient; they are richly ornamented, and my attention was particularly arrested by an exquisitely beautiful and transparent knob of chiselled stone, forming a singularly elegant rosette. The gate, which is of Roman workmanship, consists of two arches, supported by pilasters—the depth of the gateway is said to be between sixty and seventy feet.

Had not Jerusalem undergone one devastation after another, to say nothing of the numerous sieges and captures which it has sustained, we should find here a succession of monuments, or at least of their ruins, whose architectonic interest might go hand in hand with historical research. Why might we not meet with remains of the fort David, as well as of the palaces of the Persian and Egyptian monarchs? Why not with ruins of the times of the sumptuous Herods, who sought to vie with the magnificence of Rome? Next to these would follow those of the Emperor Adrian, who endeavoured to revive the worship of the lifeless, and almost forgotten, deities of Heathenism. Then, would follow the infant essays of Christian architecture, under the protection of the Byzantine emperor. After these, those of the Arabs, that were conformable with the ideas which they brought with them from their deserts. The noble style of the middle ages of Europe, and the chivalrous Teutonic

knights would come next in order, and these again would be succeeded by the Arabic, elevated by the genius and taste which it had acquired under the Egyptian caliphs. And lastly, the whole would be completed, by the heavy architecture of the Ottoman dynasty.

I know not any other spot on the globe, where, according to historical data, we might have reasonably looked for such a succession of buildings and monuments as in Jerusalem; and yet here, when they did exist, the awful fiat was pronounced, that they should be swept away by the relentless besom of destruction!

We visited the Armenian church of St. James, which is connected with a large convent, a fine garden, and very extensive buildings, consisting of numerous detached houses appropriated to the reception of pilgrims. It is said, that at Easter there are often several thousand Armenian pilgrims congregated here, from all parts of the Levant, and who form the main body of the pilgrims; the places for their accommodation are therefore larger than those of the other confessions.

The church is built on the place where the apostle St. James was beheaded, and the exact spot is pointed out by a small niche. This niche is of the most delicate workmanship, and is ornamented with stripes of metal and small pieces of mother



o' pearl inlaid in wood; a more chaste and elegant jewel-box could not be desired. All the other decorations in the church are in a similar style, and are executed with as much taste in the choice of the patterns and in the arrangement of the colours, as if they had been wrought by the light dexterous hand of a woman, though they do not display much originality of design. Among these we may rank the marble floor of the chapel, and that of the high altar, the beautiful mosaic of which rivals a Turkey carpet; and several encrusted doors, as exquisitely neat as Chinese workmanship.

The pictures, on the contrary, are manufactured in the coarsest style; the drawing, the colouring and the expression are all inconceivably bad; and the ten thousand saints all look like brothers. They are hung round the walls with the most precise regularity, frightful and stiff; as the leaden soldiers of children; there is not the slightest deviation or variation—all are equally high—equally broad, and equally hideous.

The lower part of the wall is covered with small coloured tiles; ostrich eggs and small lamps hang from the ceiling. They are the never-ending ornaments of the temples in the East, and are seen here both in all the Greek churches and in the mosques. The floors are covered with fine straw mats and carpets. The impression which the church made on me was, that it was a place of worship per-

fectly adapted for very orderly, cleanly and sober-minded men, brought up in the most precise fashion, and destitute alike of thinking faculties and of imagination.

On leaving the church, our garments and hands were sprinkled with scented water, according to the custom of the East, that treats every stranger as a guest, and places the best of everything before him, which in this country are perfumes. Does not this remind us of the frankincense and myrrh which the kings of the East presented to the infant Saviour? Is it not precisely similar to the costly ointment of spikenard with which the sorrowing Mary anointed the feet of Jesus? Two thousand years have produced no changes here in this respect. We everywhere meet with the same manners, the same customs, and the same ideas; and though different forms of religion have combined with them, they have not been essentially modified by them.

The East appears to me like a mighty cataract; water rushes upon water, an exhaustless, interminable torrent of water, while all around is repose, dignity, and silence! and all energies are concentrated and absorbed in this one mighty effort! But you may say what is the use of this, what result does it produce? To discover this, we must descend from the cataract, and follow the water in its course. The stream which seems only to have

motion in itself and to be consumed in the roar of its foaming torrent, flows onward and onward; it branches into many arms, and divides into a thousand rivulets, that diffuse life, vigour, and refreshment in their way; sometimes they dry up, and sometimes they change their course, and become the founders of another world, and another civilization, developing, recovering and preparing new elements: and such was the birth of our Western world!

In the religious ceremonies of the Oriental Christians, there still remain, doubtless without their being conscious of it, echoes from the primeval religions of the human race. To us these ceremonies appear strange and distracting, partly, because we do not understand their connection, and partly, because their unmeaning performance, resembles rather the incoherent doings of a somnambulist, than the sober actions of a conscious, wakeful person.

Among these we must reckon that of the Sacred fire on Easter Eve, when Greeks and Armenians assemble in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, and wait for the kindling of the sacred fire in the sacellum, or chapel, erected over the sepulchre—an expectation which, as I have been assured by both Protestants and Roman Catholics, is often manifested in a very tumultuous manner, and generally accompanied by frenetic excesses. At Constantinople I

met a Spaniard, a most zealous Roman Catholic, who had just arrived from Syria, who spoke with absolute disgust of the sacred fire, while his narrative called to my mind the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarias at Naples.

The Pacha with his suite, as well as all strangers and persons attracted by curiosity, assemble in the upper boxes of the rotunda which surrounds the sepulchre and leave the lower space for the thousands of devotees, who, amid yells, shouts, ruthlessness and confusion, await the kindling of the sacred fire. This is at last exhibited to them, as the flame of a torch issuing from the door and windows of the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. The multitude instantly rush forward to light their tapers, and each thinks himself blessed, if he can carry home with him a spark of the sacred fire, and the more so, as it is attended with considerable risk of life. The pressing and thronging of many thousand eager enthusiasts, with burning tapers in their hands, in the narrow space of the area, often occasion accidents; dresses, veils and other things have been constantly known to take fire, and not unfrequently persons have been crushed to death.

Much as I was shocked at the recital of these sacrilegious scenes, I was nevertheless extremely interested in again finding, under an entirely new form, this unbounded and unextinguishable venera-

tion for fire, which fills a place in the worship of all the Eastern nations, and in the religious feelings and sentiments of the Orientals. To say nothing of the ancient adoration of the sun and of fire, nor of the service of the vestals at the inextinguishable sacred fire;—nothing of the belief of the ancients, who regarded a person killed by lightning, as consecrated by the celestial element:—the Holy Scriptures are full of allusions to the adoration of fire, as practised in the East. The Israelites, the children of the Eternal God, are of course alien from the worship of fire; but, when they deserted Him, they laid their children in the burning arms of Moloch, in the valley of Hinnom.

But the Jews involuntarily recognised in fire, a messenger, a symbol, a revelation of Jehovah, from the time of Abel's sacrifice, which was consumed by fire—the burning bush on the Mount of Horeb—the smoking Mount Sinai, when the Lord descended upon it in fire, to the time when both the stone altar and the sacrifice of Elijah were consumed by fire from Heaven; and still later, to the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, in the form of tongues of fire. Each and every one of these was a manifestation of Jehovah, and we probably find the *last* trace in this ceremony of the Oriental Christians on Easter Eve.

The fundamental ideas are still the same, as they

were in the cradle of the human race; and I am convinced, that they may be traced and discovered, in all the relations of the Orientals. This, my dear mother, makes a residence here inconceivably interesting; the scenery, the people, the objects, are of such a nature, that we unconsciously connect with their present appearance, the whole history of the past, because what we, in our western homes, call a very remote antiquity, is here present to our eye, either breathing, and warm with the pulses of life, or if dead, resembling a mummy.

Nothing excites reflection like the past;—the future is the domain of fancy:—we throw into it so much of our wishes, our hopes, and our dreams, especially those which are exaggerated and indefinite, because we do not like to renounce them, and do not know what to do with them in the actual present,—that the Future becomes to us like the heavens illumined by the fitful aurora borealis, glorious;—but it is not the natural, actual state of the heavens. The Past, however, is like the true, eternal, heaven, with its unalterable constellations, which roll in their orbits undisturbed by our wishes, unobscured by our dreams—objects of our love by day, and consolation by night. We can look on them with such intense contemplation, that, compared with the shining orbs which have rolled in regular orbits for

thousands of years, and will roll on, till time shall be no more, every thing present appears tame and worthless, needlessly dressed up in gaudy tinsel, which to-morrow falls to pieces.

In this respect, Jerusalem closely resembles Rome : both wear such ample mantles of mourning, over their long purple garments, that compared with them, all mourning appears superficial, and every thing great, mean. But Rome is a ruin, picturesque, pensively melancholy, beautiful as ruins generally are ; Jerusalem is a petrified mass of destruction—or if it sounds more poetical—a weeping Niobe.

I always feel, dear mother, as if I ought to apologise to you, that such is the impression which Jerusalem produces upon me. You tell me in your letters, that you are reading Lamartine's *Oriental Tour* with much pleasure ; I have no distinct recollection of it, but I imagine that he speaks differently to what I do ; Chateaubriand certainly does. Both of them are Roman Catholics, this you must bear in mind is an important consideration, for, notwithstanding all its weaknesses, the Romish Church, in its humble garb, deprived of all worldly splendour, speaks powerfully to the heart in small congregations, in schools, in lodgings for pilgrims and strangers, the poor and the houseless, and, it is natural, that its members should be affected and delighted by these unobtrusive acts of kindness.

It is not the main point, though it certainly makes an essential difference, whether, if a warm, tender hand meets ours, and leads us hither, points out various objects—lays open some things and hides others, we have full confidence in this guiding hand, or, whether we have it not. The main point rests, in having a soul overflowing with poetry, like that of Chateaubriand; for this has the principal influence in these matters. Chateaubriand abandons himself to his genius, which, like the eye of the eagle, is more calculated to gaze on the sun, than to look down upon earth. But few can aspire to this. However, I have not read his journey to Jerusalem, I only take it for granted, that it must be pervaded by the sublime elevation of the "*Génie du Christianisme*."

Lamartine, on the other hand, comprehends objects with an enthusiastic spirit, that imparts to objects in which we take an interest, but with which we are not acquainted, an agreeable character. I am not in the least enthusiastic, my dear mother; I seek for truth, gravity and energy—without these even the beautiful is not beautiful in my estimation. But hence, it unfortunately arises that I do not write enchanting Oriental Letters.

This is my last day in Jerusalem. We paid a parting visit to the church of the Holy Sepulchre and on that occasion saw, in the vestry of the Latins,



the sword and spurs of Godfrey de Bouillon, which are still used whenever any person is invested with the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, founded by Godfrey in the year 1099, and which the Reverendissimo, as the representative of the Pope, has still the right to confer.

Traversing the city by another way, we came to the spot where the Anglican church is to be built. The walls are already raised above the foundations, but as the application for the firman necessary in all such matters was neglected, the prosecution of the building is for the present prohibited. The stone is very fine, though only from the common quarries in the vicinity of Jerusalem; it is beautifully white, and when new, looks almost like marble. Another kind of stone yet more closely resembles marble; it is whitish, with pale red clouds, and looks very well in polished slabs. The stone from Mount Zion is bright yellow, and remarkably heavy.

No natural production in the vicinity of Jerusalem is so beautiful as the stones; is not this very remarkable? The ground in its uncultivated state produces, far and near, no other plant than the *Spina Sancta*, a long, fine, thorny network. I must however acknowledge that grass is beginning to appear in several places; we observed it to-day, as we were going from the Jaffa gate, to the upper pool of Gihon, and walked about in the

neighbourhood. This gate is also called the Bethlehem gate, and the Pilgrim's gate. In front of it a kind of promenade has been formed along the extensive level of the plateau, which is much frequented in the evening.

Near to the Pool of Gihon are the Turkish graves. Here under the shadow of a splendid, primeval, solitary terebinth, the Mahometan women assemble, enveloped in their large white shrouds, which completely conceal the whole of their persons, except their huge lemon-coloured boots. At some distance from them the men were seated together, sociably smoking their pipes.

The dark figures of the Greek priests in their long black garments are often seen wandering amid these tombs; the monks of the Terra Santa walk abroad less frequently, and then invariably two and two. They have a small garden near the Pool of Gihon, and we here met the Procurador and another monk; and, as I looked at the tall, grave, Spaniard, walking along with a firm and haughty step, I could scarcely fancy that he was going to look after cabbages and cucumbers!!

Oriental Christians are also frequently seen beyond this gate, and they are instantly recognised by their Italian salutations—though they often make blunders;—thus, as we were coming home yesterday from St. John's, a man, beckoning to us with his hand, said courteously: Addio! Addio!

The commercial and the political power of the Genoese and Venetians in the Levant, has been overthrown nearly three centuries; but, how firmly it was founded is proved by the fact that their language is not yet wholly extirpated. With a knowledge of the Italian language alone, any European may make his way, as it is everywhere understood by those persons, with whom a traveller may have to do. It is said to be likewise sufficient in commercial transactions.

The Italians are still perhaps that nation, with whom the Arabs of the present day have the most resemblance, which is very naturally accounted for, when we remember that, not only Arabian blood, but, likewise Arabian dominion, was established in Calabria and Sicily, and which of course are the only parts of Italy to which I allude. In Spain, it is true, the Arab dominion lasted much longer and was more durable; but, combined with the elements which they there found, the character of the Arabs was so ennobled and developed, that the dominion of the Moors was the time of their greatest prosperity; whereas, in southern Italy, as in Syria, they were without that animating, elevating influence, and have therefore degenerated. What they have become in Egypt, I shall soon see.

I believe that my recollections of Jerusalem will be more agreeable to me, than my residence

there; and, for this reason, because I shall think of it without the least desire of seeing it again; a desire which so easily mingles with our fairest recollections, and imparts to them such a melancholy character, that we do not like always to indulge in them.

Jerusalem is beautiful as a petrification of the time of Israel, of whom the prophet said, in the name of the Lord: "Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink."

It has a still higher interest as a heavy tombstone over the most glorious form that ever visited this earth. Faithful to its gloomy, inflexible, and selfish character, it would not hear of a divine blessing, which it was to share with the whole world; it demanded an exclusive blessing for itself, and crucified the Saviour, because his blessing embraced the whole world. But the tombstone became for Him the last step of his ascension to glory, and Jerusalem has retained for itself only the melancholy character, which is impressed on the lamentable confusion of its present condition.

This present condition saddens my heart. It is not the differences between Greeks and Latins, Anglicans and Presbyterians, Jacobites and Maronites, it is nothing individual, and still less an individual—it is the condition of the whole which makes me ask, can this state of things be called

Christianity? and prompts the answer. Christianity seems not to be understood here! Farewell, dearest mother.

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LETTER XXXVI.

TO MY MOTHER.

Journey across Ramla to Gaza.

Gaza, November 16th. 1843.

ENCAMPED beneath palm trees! I have long been wishing to commence a letter under such pleasant circumstances, my dearest mother; for the satisfaction of being encamped beneath palms, and of dating a letter from such an encampment, seems an essential part of an Oriental journey. To-day I am enabled to do so, both with a good conscience and sincere pleasure, for we are to remain here a whole day, in order to make some needful preparations for our journey across the Desert.

I am incessantly reminded of these preparations by the noise and confusion which surrounds me, and which is not deadened by the thin partition of our tent. Here are camel-drivers, there officers of the quarantine, here helpers and there hinderers, inquisitive idlers, beggars and children. All this confused medley of people talk away and vociferate, in the deep, guttural tones of the Arabic language, and

are accompanied by the shrill treble notes of thirty anxious cocks and hens, who are to be our companions through the Desert, and who do not seem to be at all satisfied with their travelling basket; though it is woven of branches of palm!

The two unplanned arm-chairs which are to be suspended across a camel, and in which we shall sit very sociably, are also standing quite ready. The place of cushions is to be supplied by our mattresses, rolled up tightly, and this seat is of course more comfortable than that on the back of the animal; but whether it will really prove comfortable is another question; however, I hope I shall get accustomed to it. I have travelled in Syria and Palestine four and twenty days on horseback, sometimes eleven hours, and never less than five, in the day, and have never felt fatigued, and I therefore hope that I may be able to sit twelve days upon a camel. I have indeed been told that the motion of the camel, with its rolling tread, is enough to make one *sea-sick*! But, all the difficulties connected with my Oriental journey have been designedly so much exaggerated, that I do not quite believe it.

Two things are indispensable to render a journey in the East agreeable; a thoroughly able dragoman, and a good long purse: this I was aware of, but I could not have conceived the endless petty annoyances which have to be endured. The absence of

essential cares, on a journey of this kind, materially lightens accidental difficulties, and, by means of the above mentioned pre-requisites, they may be overcome. It is true, I am sometimes tired enough ! but, my dear mother, after you have been sitting, most easy and comfortably a whole day, in your own apartment, and have only moved from one room into another, are you not pretty well tired when eleven o'clock arrives ? The only difference is, that after a good day's journey this weariness comes on a couple of hours earlier.

I have been thoroughly rested at Jerusalem, as I had ample time to look at everything leisurely, and the kind-hearted monks quite set me up, by daily sending me cakes, and other good things, so that I lived most luxuriously. My health is excellent : and neither heat nor rain affects me. On our journey from the Dead Sea to Mar Saba, I became, what I call wet, that is to say, the rain drenched my hat and hair, so that I looked like a Triton ; but the sun soon after dried me, and I felt as well as ever.

Health is even more indispensable for a journey of this nature than an able dragoman, and a pocket full of gold, as it is utterly impossible always to take care of the body. When I was in Constantinople they wanted, as a precautionary measure, to pack up, I know not what medicines ; but I told them that, if I had the slightest apprehension, that

I should be laid up, with all the diseases for which they prescribed, I should certainly stay at home. I have a panacea!—an effervescing powder, and when I am much heated and have no appetite, or am in the least out of sorts, I have recourse to it, and have such faith in its virtue, that I feel persuaded that so long as I have it I cannot be very ill. But I am writing to quiet you, respecting my approaching perils across the Desert, as if you could read this in eight days. I will rather tell you how we came hither, to this ancient city of the Philistines, which is much spoken of in the Bible.

On the evening before our departure from Jerusalem, the Reverendissimo attended by his suite, paid me a farewell visit. How much the ways of men diverge from each other, is strikingly learnt on such a journey as this, when we become well acquainted with ourselves, and are reminded on taking leave, that we have been at home in another quarter of the world. When I return to Europe this distance will appear to me as a mere trifle. I was very desirous to persuade the Consul to accompany us to Egypt, as he had been seized with intermittent fever, change of air being considered the best antidote. But gentlemen are obliged to remain stationary at their posts, and must obtain leave before they can undertake long journeys; and he could not, therefore, comply with



our request, which he would otherwise very gladly have done.

Late at night I read the last chapter of the Revelations of St. John, which I had never yet been able to understand; nor indeed, was I able to do so this time, though I had a secret hope, that an acquaintance with the earthly Jerusalem might help to elucidate the description of the heavenly city; but the highly figurative Oriental language, which speaks of walls and foundations of crystal and precious stones, and gates of pearls, soars quite above my comprehension, and finds no parallel here.

We left Jerusalem at half-past seven o'clock on the morning before yesterday. While our things were being packed up, I hastened once more to the highest terrace, and reached it, just as the sun was rising in glory above the transjordan mountains. A solitary palm was bathing itself in his effulgence, and the little bell of the convent was summoning the monks to their early matins—for there are no large church bells here. Everything around seemed rapt in silent adoration before the great Creator, and the small, child-like voice of the little bell was very touching, amid this solemn rejoicing of all nature at the renovated beauty of morning.

We rode slowly through the Jaffa gate, over the silent rocky land towards Ramla, along the same roads

which we had travelled a fortnight ago, in an opposite direction ; but it now appeared to me much prettier. Is it because every place bears the impress of gaiety and cheerfulness compared with Jerusalem ? or, had this region invested itself with a new garment ? Be it as it may, the foliage gleamed, the plants put forth their buds, the grass sprouted, and a breath of verdure seemed to have passed over the land. Nature had lifted up her bridal veil, and looked young, lovely and smiling. From this you may form some idea how sterile and desolate Jerusalem really is ! On my journey thither, these hills appeared to me barren and naked, and they are really so, except in a very few spots, yet now I found them beautiful and attractive.

At Ramla we this time took up our abode at the Franciscan convent, as we received a promise that the gate should be opened before sunrise, which, properly speaking, is contrary to rules, but which our long prospective journey to Gaza rendered indispensably necessary. I got up at four o'clock, but I had so much leisure to look at the stars, which were shining splendidly over my little court-yard, that I fell asleep again during my contemplations.

The mukeri are an intolerably lazy people ; three of them attended me ; they all rode upon very active asses, which quite put their riders to shame. The ass is, in fact, used much more in Palestine than

the horse, and occupies an important position among the peasants, the merchants, and the citizens, and he trips along so actively and lightly that he really looks quite charming. The principal people and the Bedouins ride horses, and the women sit astride upon mules, but are always closely veiled, and exhibit only their enormous yellow boots, which make them look like wild geese.

Persons of rank,—such for instance as the wife of the pacha of Jerusalem, whom we met going to Bethlehem, as we were returning from that town,—never ride, but recline upon cushions, with their legs crossed, in a kind of puppet show box, and this ugly affair is carried by a mule. The wife of the pacha was preceded by a military escort, which was followed by the animals laden with baggage; then came the lady in her travelling box, which seemed to be made of reeds, and was covered with curtains all round, except behind, where it was left open, so that she might look back upon the road which she had traversed; female slaves, eunuchs, and slaves with children, followed on mules and asses, or on foot; and the procession moved onwards with slow and measured solemnity. In this pompous style a Turkish woman of rank generally travels, and the short ride from Jerusalem to Bethlehem was doubtless a long journey to this lady, if we may judge by

the multitudinous and extensive preparations which accompanied it.

We did not start yesterday till six o'clock, and I was really inclined to be out of humour; but it was impossible to be so, on such a morning. As soon as I had emerged from the thick, dank walls of the convent, I felt transported beneath an immense crystal bell, so pure, so mild and lovely was the horizon, the air and the sky. A thousand prismatic colours floated around me, and, as in the richly cut crystal, were beautifully reflected through this Elysian ether. I revel in the glories of this eastern sky; it entrances me, and fills my soul with ecstasy; it is impossible to describe or define it, but I feel as if I were travelling upon the clouds.

The country was by no means beautiful. Enormous hedges of cactus enclose this side of the gardens of Ramla. The plain extends far and wide; to the right rise undulating downs of sand, behind which the Mediterranean lies concealed from view, while to the left extend the blue range of the mountains of Judea. But the scene above was glorious! The pale stars waned in the roseate hues of the early twilight, which gradually merged into golden splendour, and suffused the entire vault of heaven; while, from the deep purple mantle of the east little airy clouds disengaged themselves, one after the other, like the parting leaves of the rose, and, wafted by the morning air fluttered into the bright expanse

above. The sun now broke through this gorgeous ocean of purple and gold, fresh and warm as the lips of love, and casting his bright eyes upon the gentle, crescent moon, she bashfully retired from the scene of incomparable splendour. The morning was as beautiful as that on which I travelled from Carmel to Jaffa.

The country might be a paradise if it were well cultivated; it seemed to me the most fertile throughout Palestine, and I am not at all surprised that the Israelites in former days had so many wars with the Philistines, because they were anxious to possess this rich and beautiful land. The Wurtemberg peasants, who went to settle in the valley of Jehoshaphat, ought to come here, where they would find peace and quiet till the coming of the reign of universal peace which they are anxiously awaiting, provided that Russia, which is the most influential of all the powers with the Porte, would take them under its protection. I am happy, however, to say that the Christians are not tormented in these countries by the pachas, as in former days. During the last ten or twelve years, the Porte, half willingly and half unwillingly, has accorded so much influence to the European powers, that it must have some regard to the treatment of the Rayas; and, though the government of Ibrahim was only transitory, his tolerance towards Christians may at least have so far yielded beneficial results, that the Mahometans have learnt that it is possible

to be a Mahometan, without despising or misusing them.

We passed through several villages, in the neighbourhood of which the peasants were busily occupied in ploughing the land. The olive is the prevailing tree, but it is only planted near the villages. Large, lonely districts were uncultivated and produced nothing but a little dark blue flower, which we called the pearl hyacinth, and an enormous bulbous plant, the leaves of which resemble the iris, but which was unfortunately not in bloom. Giorgio, who had travelled this way last February, told us that the whole country, at that time, resembled a parterre of the most varied flowers.

We did not see the ruins of Askalon, and had only occasional glimpses of the sea, when it became visible between the hollows in the downs. We clearly discerned where the vale of Terebinths runs into the plain from between the mountains, which become flatter at that end of the valley.

In the afternoon we were very much troubled by a south wind, which carried thick clouds of dust into our faces, and against which the open plain did not afford us the least protection. At last, however, when we were within about an hour's distance from Gaza, we found some shelter in a very extensive grove of colossal olive trees, detached from the city, which we saw rising on a small eminence completely surrounded by the most beautiful palms.

The sun was going down, rayless, and opaque as the yolk of an egg. This was caused by the sand of the Desert, and portended a storm.

We remained without the city and went to the large well, which was thronged with men and animals, as water must be here obtained for a two days' supply, in travelling to El Arish. We struck our tent on an open, level spot, surrounded by a khan, burying places, garden walls, a mosque, heaps of rubbish, hedges of cactus, and magnificent palms. The latter were laden with large bunches of brownish dates, which were covered with a net to protect them from the flies. Here, on the boundary between Syria and Arabia the date first ripens, and my tent is pitched beside them! I have got up from my writing eight or ten times to satisfy myself that they are really there, and each time have been delighted with their beautiful and noble form.

I have also been most prosaically occupied in looking after our provisions and requisites, as these are of great importance in the Desert. Giorgio tells me that we are amply supplied for a fortnight; and, as Cairo is reckoned only an eleven days' journey, I am perfectly satisfied. Our bread has been baked in Jerusalem, and the dough has been prepared in such a manner, that though the bread becomes hard, it remains perfectly eatable. It is, indeed, no little matter to think of, and provide for all our various wants; and truly it requires the experience of a

dragoman! You can form no conception what it is to be obliged to carry every thing with you, from the ambulating poultry yard to the grains with which the fowls are to be fed, and the coals with which they are to be cooked! I must confess that I was perfectly astonished to find how much is indispensable for the support of life, even in its most simple requirements; but really this poultry yard takes up too much of my thoughts! I began my letter with it, and now find myself in the midst of it again. I will therefore rather break off at once.

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## LETTER XXXVII.

### TO MY MOTHER.

Departure from Gaza—Camel riding—Journey across the Desert  
to El Arish—Quarantine

El Arish, November 21st. 1843.

My dear mother, I am going to write to you, but it is scarcely fair, for I am in a humour which I may well call savage! Only fancy, here we are sitting in quarantine! Travellers from the Desert to Cairo sitting in quarantine! As if Egypt were not the real hot-bed of the plague! They might at least have placed it in a more eligible spot; for here there is bad water, and not a drop of



milk, nor a citron can be obtained to make it at all palatable.

There is not more to refresh the eye than the body: low sand hills, driven together by the wind bound the horizon; and if I toil up one of these eminences, I have only a yet more extended horizon bounded in the same way. And above all at this season of the year! the wind blows hard, day and night, and the sand is so thoroughly tossed up, that a fine dust fills the air, and notwithstanding all precaution, it penetrates everything. We have occasionally a heavy fall of rain during the night, which, however, has not the slightest influence on this all pervading dust; and in the Desert it is by no means a matter of indifference whether you are detained under your tent six days longer than you had calculated upon.

There is a quarantine establishment here, as it is called, which consists of a few clay hovels placed round a court; but the four Frenchmen, who have been our avant-couriers ever since we were at Beyrout, are already imprisoned there, with their people, their camels, and their camel drivers, an enormous caravan! so that we should come rather short of fresh air there; besides which, the sand has this advantage, that, although it is so thick that it may sometimes contain a harmless beetle, yet it never harbours vermin, which dilapidated buildings do in an extraordinary degree; I, there-

fore, greatly preferred taking up my quarters in my clean tent.

While we were at Gaza, the camel drivers told us that we should have to perform quarantine at El Arish, and asked whether we would not rather avoid it, and go round to Cairo by another way. But we did not trust him, for these people have a great predeliction for secret and bye-ways, which are sometimes shorter, but almost invariably worse than the main road.

Our dragoman has accidentally always performed his different journeys from Cairo to Gaza when there is no quarantine, and he therefore could give us no information upon the subject. He was accordingly dispatched with my firman to the governor of Gaza, to make the inquiry in a quarter which might be depended upon, whether or not there were quarantine at El Arish. He returned with the answer that there was none, and we, of course, placed more reliance on the word of the governor than on that of the camel driver. What could have induced him to make this false assertion is inconceivable, and he has acted in precisely the same way to the French travellers. Perhaps he was ashamed that the Egyptian government is able to carry out this measure, while the Turkish has not the power of doing so. The medical man here told us, that it was attempted to establish a quarantine at Gaza, but that the Arabs drove away the

surgeon, and no further notice was taken of the plan. Well, the first and only time when I was anxious that my firman should be of some service to me, it yielded these pleasant fruits !

We did not leave Gaza till ten o'clock on the 17th, as there was a tremendous quarrel between the dragoman and the owner of the camels, because he had furnished wretched animals ; of course the half of Gaza eagerly took part in it. Whether they were exchanged or not, I really do not know ! All this disputing did not trouble me in the least, so little indeed, that I did not once inquire the cause ; I could not have appeased their brawl, and the dragoman best knew how to secure our rights, and we had probably been unfairly dealt with on this occasion, because he went to the magistrate.

In mounting a camel for the first time, it is most essential to take care that you do not tumble off, when the animal raises himself, which he does in a very perceptible see-saw motion, first half upon his fore legs, then upon his hind legs, and lastly he elevates himself to his full height in front : the same mode is observed in lying down. You first shoot forward a few feet, and then backward ; but I always hold fast by the seat of my arm-chair, with all my might and main, and am now beginning to be pretty well accustomed to it.

The camels here have only one bunch, over which

is placed a sort of cradle or roof, made of rude lattice work, and lined with coarse cushions, coverlets and branches of trees, in order that the animal may not be hurt. To the rafters of this roof the burdens are attached with thick cords, and equally poised, in order to preserve the balance. Thus our chairs are suspended; mine is filled with a variety of objects to make it heavier. They are large, dreadfully uncouth, and needlessly huge machines, being calculated for the Arabs, who occupy much more space than we do, as they sit with their legs crossed under them. Here I am installed in my airy throne, at least seven feet above the ground; but I do anything but float in the air, for I am rocked and shaken to such a degree, that I almost lose my senses, and am rather stupified.

It is indeed a *sine qua non*, that in speaking of the Desert, you must only say "the sublime silence of the Desert," or "the majestic stillness and solitude of the Desert imparts to the soul this or that exalted bias." I cannot assent to this opinion: perhaps if I had been travelling on a horse or mule, it might have produced a different impression; but seated upon a camel, I feel exactly as if I were degraded into a bale of goods, transported in a railway waggon.

The camel has a horror of lying down: why, I cannot conceive; and he never does it without evincing his displeasure by low grunts, and being driven, beaten, threatened, and encouraged by the

driver with a peculiar sort of growl. When once you are safely mounted, and the animal is set in motion, it is well enough; but you must not move of your own accord, without paying special regard to the equipoise of the seat, which is easily lost, if the cords by which it is attached are in the least slackened. And then again, you must pay attention to the position of your fellow-traveller, and sit in the same posture as he does. Enough; it is not a journey, but a conveyance across the Desert, as bad as by a railway carriage. Whether it was this association of the two extremes of travelling by camel or railway, which transported me to Europe; or, whether the Desert in truth produced no characteristic impression upon my mind, I know not, but you will never guess what occupied me! My thoughts were wholly absorbed in Europe, and I was busily engaged in the scenes of a tale which I mean to write some day or other; it was the first time in the whole course of this journey that I was visited with thoughts of this kind; and they diverted me very much, whenever I began to grow weary of the tedium of the Desert.

The first day's journey, however, was certainly not through a Desert, for the country very much resembled that which lies between Ramla and Gaza, except that there is less cultivation, and consequently there are more sterile tracts. Wherever

they were ploughing, it was done with camels, which had a most ridiculous effect. Stiff and starch as it is, the camel never was designed as a beast of draught; but in these parts it already begins to be the best, nay, the only possession of the people, which the camel understands so well that it yields its owner as great a return as that which the horse, the ox, and the sheep yield us conjointly. It transports men and burdens, it draws the plough; its hair is woven into coverlets, its milk is relished as a delicious beverage, and its dung, when mixed with chopped straw and dried, is used for fuel. The preparing of this fuel, which is spread out upon the roofs to be dried by the sun, is practised throughout all Syria; and in every village you see the women and children most busily employed in this work, with no other implement than their ten fingers.

The camel is an object of the tenderest solicitude of the Arab, and the young ones are cherished as if they were little children. "My camel," is the pet name which a woman bestows upon her husband; and in her lamentation over his dead body, she constantly reiterates, "O my beloved camel! who will help me to carry my burden?"

There is something very disgusting to me about the camel: it has a most disagreeable appearance, with its dirty coat covered with weals and short stumpy hair; and, on one occasion, when my camel

turned his long neck and snuffled at my feet, I involuntarily drew them up with displeasure. The driver observed this, and to give me a practical demonstration how this animal ought to be treated, he drew down its head, and kissed its slobbering mouth! I was excessively astonished, not that he should kiss the camel—for this was in character with this semi-barbarian—but that he should know anything about kissing at all.

These men are not like the Taumirah Bedouins, an athletic, proud, handsome race, but they are the settled Arabs, the inhabitants of villages, who live in their hovels, covered with camels' dung, and, utterly degenerated in their miserably poor existence, have a lamentable, nerveless appearance. Five of them accompanied us, mostly lads; but their faces looked aged, and their bodies were stunted: features and form were alike care-worn. The pole of our tent, which one Bedouin held firmly upright while the tent was being spread, was supported by two of these Arabs with so much difficulty, that they were often obliged to call a third to their assistance; indeed, everything they do has a painful expression of indolence and inefficiency. They do not lay hold of any thing in a thorough, practical manner; no cord is drawn tightly, and no package is hung straight; the camel has not proceeded above a quarter of an hour before the baggage is sure to come loose, when they begin pulling and pushing,

till it is in some sort of order. They can, however, walk famously: I might indeed say, they seem made for it, because their whole life is devoted to escorting caravans to Suez or Cairo.

The camel moves very slowly; but it is so large that it is necessary to walk very fast, in order to keep pace with its long step, and this the Arabs accomplish easily, walking with their unshodden feet through the grating sand, and over the thorny plants of the Desert. The pace of the camel is not jolting, but distressingly pushing, if I may use the term, so that the rider is rocked backwards and forwards with the upper part of its body, as soon as it moves its feet. From the description which had been given me, I was prepared to find the exertion much greater than it really was, and I was therefore very agreeably disappointed with my ride on the first day, and the more so, as our journey did not lie through the Desert.

A very pretty palm-grove lay by the side of a little village, which the camel-driver called Deir, which, however, is only the Arabic name for village. We halted as early as four o'clock, in an open field; but, as it afterwards proved, in a rather dangerous neighbourhood. A large and very cheerful village with two mosques, lay about a mile from our encampment: and we heard numerous musket shots, which we attributed to the celebration of a marriage, or to some other feast. We were walk-



ing in the direction of the village, when a strange, whizzing noise came quite near us, and lo ! a ball had strayed in this very direction ! I had not the least inclination to fall a sacrifice to this feast, as I supposed it to be ; though in the end it proved to be anything but a feast, for the village of Hanyounis, as the Arabs called it, was in the act of open insurrection. This is, however, an every day occurrence under the Turkish government.

Whenever the officers attempt to collect the tribute, an insurrection immediately breaks out ; if the soldiers come to levy troops, or more correctly speaking, to take them per force, again there is an insurrection. The Turkish administration is confined to these two acts, and as the people receive from it neither support, assistance, nor advantage, and consequently only become acquainted with it, by these acts, which they greatly dislike, they instantly make opposition.

On this occasion tribute was to be raised, but the people refused to give it, and sought to disperse those who were sent to collect it, and as it appeared successfully, for the shrill triumphant zugharit of the women completely drowned the musketry and the din of the mob. I am however, heartily tired of these Arabian insurrections, for since I have been at Beyrout I have heard of little else. The noise of the musketry, I am happy to say, did not disturb my sleep.

On the 18th. we broke up soon after six o'clock. Though there were still some traces of cultivation, we no longer saw any villages, and on this side of the boundary between the Turkish and Egyptian government, which is indicated by a large well, and which we reached at 12 o'clock, the country assumed a decidedly sterile aspect. The hills looked as if they were composed of driven sand; the level tracts of country between them were also covered with a dead sand, here and there interspersed with a little soil, which, watered by the rain of the former winter produced a scanty vegetation of briars and prickles. These plants are very much like our heath or gorse, more wood than leaves; and therefore present an ungenial, northern aspect, which does not gladden the eye.

By the side of the well stood a pile of ruins, perhaps those of an ancient grave; the camel driver fetched some dust from them, with which he besprinkled his animals, as if they were not dirty enough already; and being asked why he did so, he replied, that it was very conducive to their health; from this I conclude that some patron saint of the camels is buried here. Islamism has no saint like the Greek and the Romish Churches: but the Mohametans have saints something like the Indian Fakirs; men who impose upon themselves the severest penances and chastisements, like Simeon Stylites, or who renounce all the endowments or

mind and body, in order to gain renown, and to be memorialised. They are called Santons, and they are not only honoured during their lifetime, for example: their touch is considered sanitary, and their decision irrevocable; but miracles are even ascribed to their graves.

Idiots and persons of weak intellect are likewise objects of great veneration among the Arabs, who in speaking of them say, "their spirit is in heaven." I have, however, heard so fearful a description of the mad-house at Constantinople; of fetters and corporal chastisements, and of unpardonable neglect, that I can scarcely reconcile this barbarity with the veneration of which they speak. Perhaps only the harmless idiot, or the religious enthusiast is honored, while raging madness is sought to be abated by this horrid, inhuman treatment.

The pile of ruins, however, may be nothing more than one of the erections of Ibrahim Pacha, who established a regular post from Cairo to Syria, through this part of the Desert.

We halted at four o'clock, amid dry, thorny plants, on a large furrowed plain. What I am to find of a sublime character here, I really know not! Believe me, dear mother, the Desert is absolutely tedious. If you can remember how the country looked between Berlin and Strelitz before the causeway was made to the East Sea, you can bring to your mind a lively picture of the Desert; sand, sand, nothing but

sand; and between whiles, where there is a little water, as at Oranienburg and at Dannenwalde, here there is a green oasis; but of course the vegetation is of quite a different character. It is true that the face of that part of the country has not been changed, yet you roll rapidly along the causeway, without stopping to look at it, or you lean back in the corner of the carriage occupied with a book, with your thoughts, or with waking dreams. Now fancy that you are carried along this road, slowly and solemnly by a camel, and tell me honestly, whether *ennui* would not be your predominant feeling. Desert is desert still, and what fatigues me in the march of Brandenburg fatigues me in Arabia also. Nearly all the people who come here are so elated at travelling on the back of a camel, in the Desert of Arabia, on the renowned isthmus of Suez, which connects the two worlds, that every thing combined appears highly interesting to them, and thus their own imagination clothes the Desert in glowing hues: while I, on the other hand, pourtray it in unvarnished colours, just as it really is.

On the 19th we started at seven o'clock, and arrived at El Arish at ten. Several people from the town met us, heartily shook hands with our camel-driver, and assured us that there was indeed a quarantine! What they thought of the necessity of a quarantine was plainly indicated by their shaking hands so cordially; while we, on our part

inferred that it was merely a speculation on the purse of the traveller! Enough! Here we sit, buried in sand, like living corpses, so that if I merely put my foot out of the tent, I sink beneath the angles; and swallow a very fair proportion of sand, with rice, sugar, and indeed with everything that I eat.

A beautiful nebbek tree stands in the vicinity of our tent; it may indeed be called a phenomenon of nature, in a place where not a blade of grass is to be seen far and near. The camels and their drivers are lodged beneath and around it, and an inharmonious concert is kept up between the men and animals. Just beyond the plain on which we are encamped, two tents are pitched, in which some merchants from Gaza are also performing quarantine.

The inhabitants of the country pay seventy Turkish piastres for the hire of a camel from Gaza to Cairo, while we paid one hundred and thirty; and for the one on which two persons ride one hundred and sixty, which scarcely amounts to eleven Prussian dollars; an incredibly small sum for so long a journey. The miserable and impoverished owners of the camels are not the better for this sum, for the governor of Gaza, who fixes the prices according to his own fancy, under the pretext that he will not suffer travellers to be imposed upon by these people, merely allows them a share; but who can tell how small a share?

I fear, my dear mother, that you will be sadly annoyed at my letter from the Desert; but I think that letters of this kind must sometimes be written upon travels, as a relief to the brighter parts of the picture. However, the whole of my tour in Syria has been, without a single exception, so truly prosperous and agreeable, that I am quite out of the habit of meeting with misadventures. Farewell, my best thoughts and love attend you.

END OF VOL. II.

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